



## IN MEMORIAM

John Gardner Phillips  
Professor of Astronomy, Emeritus  
Berkeley  
1917 — 2001

John G. Phillips, an active member of the faculty in the Department of Astronomy on the University of California, Berkeley campus, beginning in 1950 until well after his retirement in 1987, died on June 1, 2001, after a brief period of failing health.

John Gardner Phillips was born in West Haven, Connecticut, on January 7, 1917. He was the eldest of four children and had two brothers and a sister. His father, Ray Edmund Phillips, was a Congregationalist missionary who was assigned to South Africa soon after John was born. John's childhood was spent in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he received his early education. When he reached college age, he returned to the United States to attend Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. He graduated in 1939 and went on to graduate school at the University of Arizona, where he received an M.S. degree in 1942. During the war years, 1942-45, he served as an instructor of meteorology at the University of Chicago. After a brief period working in an industrial laboratory, his interest in astrophysics took him to the University of Chicago's Yerkes Observatory, where he studied with some of the foremost astronomers of that time. He was particularly interested in the spectroscopy of molecules of astronomical importance. He was awarded the Ph.D. in astronomy from the University of Chicago in 1948 for his dissertation on the dicarbon molecule (under the direction of G. Herzberg). He remained at Yerkes as an instructor for two years and then joined the astronomy faculty of UC Berkeley in 1950. In 1960 he was advanced to professor of astronomy. He was chairman of the department from 1964 to 1967 and again from 1971 to 1974. He retired in 1987.

John Phillips' scientific contributions concerned the analysis of the spectra of molecules, although he was also active in the design and construction of advanced instrumentation to speed and improve such analyses. He saw early the importance of computers and made excellent use of them in his work. In all, he published more than 60 scientific papers, many in collaboration with Sumner Davis of the UC Berkeley Department of Physics. He published the bimonthly Newsletter of Molecular Analyses for more than 40 years, first in collaboration with F. A. Jenkins, and then with Sumner Davis. In this publication, current molecular analyses by spectroscopists worldwide are reviewed; it has an international circulation of several hundred and is continuing under new auspices.

In the UC Berkeley Department of Astronomy, Phillips taught many courses in both specialized astrophysics and general astronomy. Over a period of more than 40 years, from shortly after he came to Berkeley until just before his death, he taught many hundreds of students in the astronomy course given by correspondence through University of California Extension. He strongly believed that such teaching, which took a great deal of time, was an important duty for departments to perform and a useful service to the students who were frequently far from the University.

He was a coauthor (with Dinsmore Alter and Gerald Clemence) of a popular astronomy book, Pictorial Astronomy, which has gone through many editions.

Phillips made many contributions to the scientific and academic communities through service on committees, boards, and commissions. His advice was frequently sought. In addition to long service for the Astronomical

Society of the Pacific, he was associate editor of Annual Reviews of Astronomy and Astrophysics from 1966 to 1989; president of Commission 14 of the International Astronomical Union (Atomic and Molecular Data); representative of the International Astronomical Union on the Triple Commission for Spectroscopy (composed of three international organizations); and member of the Advisory Panel of the National Bureau of Standards (heat division); in addition to many other appointments. As a professor, he was a member of many university committees ranging from the Physical Sciences Advisory Council, to acting as the astronomy representative at the School of Education.

John Phillips is survived by his three daughters, Jane Phillips of El Cerrito, California, Cindy Hart of Edmonds, Washington, and Gail Phillips of Berkeley, California, and by his granddaughter, Diana Hart of Edmonds, Washington. His wife of 55 years, Margaret Butler Phillips, predeceased him by 18 months. His many friends, colleagues, and former students will always remember his gentle humor, kind advice, and quiet dedication with appreciation and fond regret.

Jonathan Arons  
Frank H. Shu  
Harold Weaver