

# Opinion



Shirley M. Hufstedler

*The Owens Valley Radio Observatory's millimeter interferometer was dedicated before a crowd of 200 guests Saturday, May 4. Consisting of three 10.4-meter antennas acting as a single large radio telescope, the extremely precise instrument will produce high-resolution images at millimeter wavelengths, a new region of the spectrum for astronomical observation. One of the interferometer's principal targets will be the clouds of gas and dust in which stars are born, regions that are opaque to visible and ultraviolet radiation.*

*Caltech President Marvin Goldberger, Anthony Readhead, OVRO director and professor of radio astronomy, and Laura Bautz, director of the National Science Foundation's Division of Astronomical Sciences, spoke at the ceremony.*

*The Honorable Shirley Hufstedler, former U. S. Court of Appeals judge and the first Secretary of Education, formally dedicated the interferometer on behalf of the Caltech Board of Trustees by unveiling a commemorative plaque. Before doing so she gave the following address.*

**I** FIND IT unusually fitting that instruments of this quality and elegance should be placed in this setting.

One of the things that I believe is the most impressive about this extraordinary project is the talent and the cooperation that made it possible. Let us realize that this instrumentation can take the ingenuity and reach and imagination of mind and stretch it for billions of years. Let us know that we can see the birth and death of stars while standing here. Let us realize that it is not only the people who have been singled out for special mention today (and they should be), but all of the people that made it possible for those people to work together.

How many generations of teachers of science produced the scientists who produced this great work? How many people whose eyes gazed in the sky so very long ago with the most primitive of instruments caused people to think in the way that made this kind of innovation possible?

Let us remember that the National Science Foundation is supported by taxpayers. It was created by thoughtful people, and it exists because there are enough human beings in this country who know how great science can be when it is left to do the most constructive things.

Let us remember how many craftsmen came here to help. Roads had to be built to this place. People in the town of Bishop had to care. People in this community have to know what these instruments mean and how, in the best of scientific worlds, we now

have seen what human talent and cooperation can be. Remember, we have linked institutions. We have linked governments. We have linked the private sector. We have thereby forged a chain of human institutions and responsibilities that permit us to have this great vision into the vastness, the magnificence, and the terror that is the universe.

All the time at OVRO there are people who mind this facility and who care about it, who maintain the gritty things that have to be done — like the roads. But they also maintain these extraordinary instruments. There are people here observing all the time. Here we have six telescopes operated 365 days a year, accurately beyond all imagining to my non-scientific mind. Here we have people who are listening around the clock. We have people who are cooperating with others all over the world who are doing the same thing, thereby expanding the knowledge of all humankind.

Think of how wonderful it would be if we could turn the attention of the world to projects ever more constructive like this. Humankind has the power to create, but it has the power to destroy. Let us be joyful that we can celebrate the power to create on a beautiful day, bringing together all the talent that is here.

It is a very great honor on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Caltech, to dedicate the millimeter interferometer to the service of world knowledge of cosmology. □