© 2010: Instituto de Astronomía, UNAM - A Long Walk Through Astronomy: A Celebration of Luis Carrasco's 60th Birthday
Ed. E. Recillas, A. Luna, & Y. D. Mayya

PREFACE

The Meeting "A Long Walk Through Astronomy: A Celebration of Luis Carrasco's 60th Birthday" took place in the beautiful seaside resort of Huatulco in Oaxaca, México, from October 15 to 17, 2008. The event was organized and sponsored by the Instituto Nacional de Astrofísica, Óptica y Electrónica (INAOE) and the Instituto de Astronomía, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM).

The setting was very appropriate for celebrating Luis Carrasco on this, his 60 birthday, as one of the most creative and resourceful astronomers that we have at INAOE. Luis was first associated for many years at the Instituto de Astronomía at UNAM, where he trained several students who are now noted astronomers on their own right. His ideas have always been the starting point of research projects that proved correct and groundbreaking. He has always had a great interest in developing astronomical instruments for use at our national observatories. While at UNAM he designed and constructed astronomical software and hardware, an NIR Camera that was to be one of the very first to be installed at the 2 m reflector at Observatorio Astronómico Nacional at San Pedro Mártir where he was also head of the observatory in the late 80's. Years later he successfully started the LMT/GTM project now well under way at INAOE with an international collaboration with the University of Massachussetts, USA. As a way of thanking Luis for his lifelong interest in developing some truly mexican astronomical scientific groups and institutions, we organized this conference that covered most of the topics he has worked on from his very first interest in stellar formation and infrared astronomy to the realm of galaxies in clusters and the AGN mechanisms as well as the developing of new instruments and telescopes.

The meeting was attended by fellow collaborators of Luis from many parts of the world. The sessions consisted of invited talks from key speakers and contributed papers as well as several poster presentations.

The topics included are as follows: infrared and optical studies of galactic star forming regions; dynamics of stellar populations in galaxies; M82: a local laboratory for starburst phenomena; photometric and spectroscopic variability of AGN's and astronomical instrumentation.

Many of the topics were particularly interesting for our participating students, as the conference was not designed around one single specific astronomical area but around many of the current problems that Luis has contributed over the years with seminal papers or ideas.

We would like to thank all our participants for their efforts in preparing their contributions in honor of Luis Carrasco and which contributed to highlight some of the current most important research in star formation, dynamics of galaxies, starburst galaxies, galaxies with active galactic nuclei and astronomical instrumentation, that is now under way since Luis first started his "long walk" as one of our most valued scientists.

We are indebted to the INAOE and IA-UNAM for their generous financial and logistic support. Many thanks also go to the local authorities at the Ayuntamiento Constitucional de Huatulco, the Secretaría de Turismo de Oaxaca as well as to the Rector of the Universidad del Mar, Dr. Modesto Seara Vázquez. During the conference, several talks for the general public were given as well as some radio interviews by the assisting participants.

We specially acknowledge the financial support given by the Instituto de Astronomía, UNAM for the publication of these proceedings.

Finally we would like to thank the admirable organizing work of our colleges from the Organizing committee as well as the technical staff of INAOE. Their continuous effort was key to a succesful meeting.

The members of the Organizing Committee were: Luis Aguilar (IA-UNAM), Miguel Chávez (INAOE), José Guichard (INAOE), Jesús González (IA-UNAM), Omar López-Cruz (INAOE), Abraham Luna (INAOE), Y. Divakara Mayya (INAOE), Elsa Recillas (Chair, INAOE), Raúl Mújica (INAOE) and José Ramón Valdes (INAOE).

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