PREFACE

As part of the celebrations of the International Year of Astronomy, we proposed to hold a meeting to honor the achievements and development of the early phases of modern Mexican astronomy.

For this purpose, we decided to review the most significant contributions, those with the highest number of citations, published in the Boletín de los Observatorios de Tonantzintla y Tacubaya, that cover a period from 1952 through 1972, and some additional material of special significance.

For each of the selected articles we invited an expert to review the state of the field at the time of publication and to provide an overview of the present status of the subject. In some cases these were the authors themselves. Panelists were also asked to provide, if possible, an outlook for most likely developments. In order to stimulate the exchange of ideas and views during the symposium, we allocated ample time for general discussions.

The meeting was very successful in that it achieved the desired objective: to acquaint the younger astronomical community with our history. The two-day meeting was held at Instituto de Astrofísica, Óptica y Electrónica in Tonantzintla, Puebla on 5 -7 November 2009.

The members of the Scientific Organizing Committee were: José Franco López (IA-UNAM), José Guichard (INAOE), Raúl Mújica (INAOE), Manuel Peimbert (IA-UNAM), Omar López-Cruz [co-chair] (INAOE) and Silvia Torres-Peimbert [co-chair] (IA-UNAM).

The members of the Local Organizing Committee were: Omar López-Cruz [co-chair] (INAOE), Silvia Torres-Peimbert [co-chair] (IA-UNAM), Raúl Mújica (INAOE), José Ramón Valdés (INAOE), Miguel Chávez (INAOE), Santiago Alfredo Díaz-Azuara (IA-UNAM), and Bertha Vázquez Román (IA-UNAM). In addition, Alfredo Díaz-Azuara designed the web page, Gabriela López Lucio designed the poster, José Zamora provided the photo of the volcanoes at dawn that appear on the web page and G. Cerón and his team at INAOE provided the logistics during the symposium. Raúl Mújica and G. Cerón produced a video with original material on the dedication of the Observatorio Astrofísico Nacional de Tonantzintla in 1942; this video can be found in the symposium web page.

We are grateful to the Harlow Shapley Visiting Lecturer Program of the American Astronomical Society for supporting Dave Philip's participation, to José Guichard of Instituto de Astrofísica, Óptica y Electrónica for his hospitality and to José Franco of Instituto de Astronomía, UNAM for supporting the publication of these proceedings.

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Editors of the proceedings