

DIRK BROUWER

Munson Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy
Director, Yale University Observatory

Dirk Brouwer, Munson Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy at Yale University and Director of the Yale Observatory, is one of America's leading astronomers.

He has headed Yale's Department of Astronomy and its Observatory since 1941 during which time he has directed a massive photographic mapping of the sky for Yale's monumental studies of star positions and motions which were used in the 1950s by James W. Blacwood, outstanding astronomer of his day.



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Star positions are known down to certain limits of star brightness for the first half of this century are now complete for most of the northern sky.

Professor Brouwer is a noted authority in the field of celestial mechanics, especially its application to the study of motions of bodies in the solar system.

He has received many honors during his career. In 1955 the Royal Astronomical Society of Great Britain awarded him its two highest honors for the year, as recipient of the Society's Gold Medal -- which ranks in the field of astronomy like a Nobel Prize in other fields -- and as the Society's George Darwin lecturer. The Gold Medal award began in 1828, and the list of recipients down through the years includes many of the world's best-known astronomers as well as scientists who have made important contributions to astronomy, such as

Professor Brouwer was honored in 1950 by his colleagues in the International Astronomical Union to receive the Henry Draper Medal. In 1957 one of his predecessors, Ernest W. Brown, was selected, and in 1957 Professor Schlesinger was so honored.

Under Professor Brouwer's leadership Yale is currently expanding its astronomy work, both through the construction of a new observing station in nearby Bethany and in increased research.

In the spring of 1954 the Yale astronomer was one of two American astronomers invited to participate in an international ceremony of dedication of the Belovit Pulkovo Observatory near Leningrad, U.S.S.R. He returned to the United States with the warning that Russian science was far advanced, a warning which has since been justified in the light of earth satellites.

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Professor Martinus van Delden, born in the Netherlands, on September 1, 1894, the son of Martinus and Louisa van Kammen Brouwer. He was educated at the University of Leiden, receiving his Ph.D. degree there in 1927.

He served as Assistant in Theoretical Astronomy at Leiden from 1923 to 1927 and in the latter year became a Fellow of the International Education Board at Yale. In 1928 he was appointed to the Yale faculty as Instructor in Astronomy, and was promoted to be Assistant Professor in 1933, Associate Professor in 1939 and full Professor in 1941.

Since 1941, also, he has served as editor of the *Astronomical Journal*, official publication of the American Astronomical Society. He also has served on advisory committees of the Office of Naval Research and of the National Science Foundation, currently as a member of the National Science Foundation's Divisional Committee on Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences.

He has written on astronomical navigation. He also was one of the authors of the book "Spherographical Navigation", which explained a theory of navigation to simplify problems of pilots. The book was published in 1944. In 1951 he was one of the authors of the volume "Coordinates of the Five Outer Planets, 1653-2060", the preparation of which required the use of the most powerful computing equipment then existing. More recently he has made a detailed study of the rotation of the Earth, and has advanced evidence that the observed irregularities in the length of the day are the consequence of small random variations of geophysical origin.

He is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Astronomical Society, Astronomical Society of the Pacific, International Astronomical Union, National Academy of Sciences, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and many other scientific organizations.

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