

Bruce Woodgate

Matt Mountain, mmountain@stsci.edu, Bill Oegerle, william.oegerle@nasa.gov, & Ken Sembach, sembach@stsci.edu

It is with heavy hearts that we pass along the sad news of the passing of Bruce Woodgate. Bruce was an exceptional man—kind, thoughtful, and generous with his time and his ideas. For those in our community who may not have personally known Bruce, you surely identify him as the principal

investigator (PI) of the Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph (STIS) and thereby recognize his profound impact on *Hubble's* science program. Those of us who had the pleasure of working with him on various projects will always remember his clarity of vision and purpose, and his insatiable desire to innovate. Bruce's legacy to the field of astronomy is broad and enduring, represented not only by the scientific papers he authored, but also the research of the thousands of astronomers who have used—and continue to use—the instruments Bruce built to explore the universe. He was a master instrument builder on whose shoulders we stand. Bruce will be sorely missed.

Bruce had a remarkable career, spanning nearly 40 years as a civil servant at Goddard. He retired recently and was still working on ultraviolet detectors as an emeritus scientist. Bruce had very broad interests, in subjects ranging from earth science to stellar atmospheres to exoplanets to the large-scale structure in the universe—and of course, instrumentation of all sorts. We can't possibly list all his endeavors here, but here a few highlights.

In 1974, Bruce served as co-PI and experiment manager for the Ultraviolet Spectrometer and Polarimeter (UVSP) on the *Solar Maximum Mission (SMM)*.

In this capacity he was responsible for the design, development, testing and post-launch operation of the instrument. A number of important results were obtained with the UVSP. Bruce was also the *SMM* Project Scientist from 1983 to early 1986, leading the science team through the preparations for and aftermath of the 1984 *SMM* repair mission on STS-41C—NASA's first in-space satellite repair.

Bruce was probably best known as the PI for STIS, a second-generation instrument for the *Hubble Space Telescope*. In this capacity he led the design and development of the instrument, including preparation of flight-worthy large-format CCDs and Multi Anode Multi Array detectors. STIS dramatically advanced the state of the art over the previous *Hubble* spectrographs. STIS was installed on *Hubble* in 1997 and operated for seven years, until a power-supply failure occurred. STIS was repaired in 2009 during the final *Hubble* servicing mission, and it operates well to this day. STIS has proved to be a very versatile instrument and has played a key role in several of *Hubble's* most famous discoveries, including (1) spatially resolved spectroscopy of the nuclei of galaxies, indicating the presence of supermassive black holes, and (2) the first detection of the atmospheric composition of a planet around another star (HD 209458), in which sodium, carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen were discovered. STIS has also enabled new discoveries about the nature of proto-planetary disks, supernova remnants, massive stars, and the intergalactic medium.

Bruce was also a tireless inventor of new technologies. Early in his career, he developed a technique for making conically shaped mosaics of thin crystals to produce large-area x-ray spectrometers. The two crystal-cleaving machines developed to produce thin crystal wafers are known worldwide. Bruce was co-inventor of the earlier of these two machines, holding a U. S. patent. More recently, he was developing a next generation photon-counting UV detector, employing advances in solid-state physics and nano-fabrication techniques.

A measure of Woodgate's research impact is his publication record: he has published 188 scientific and technical journal papers that have over 5300 citations. He has received Goddard's Award of Merit and the NASA's Distinguished Service Medal.

Descriptions of Bruce's scientific and technical accomplishments do not tell the whole story of his impact on the profession of astronomy. He mentored legions of students and young scientists and was a friend to everyone.

Bruce was born in Eastbourne, East Sussex, England and received his PhD from the University College London. After holding positions at Columbia University and Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York, Bruce came to Goddard Space Flight Center in 1975, where he remained for the rest of his career. Bruce is survived by his wife, Patricia, and their two daughters, Cathy and Nina.



Bruce Woodgate. (Photo courtesy of David P. Friedlander.)

