

Physics & Astronomy Colloquium

Presents

Dr. Virginia Trimble

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She/her

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Thursday, February 1, 2024
12:10 pm, Webster Room 11

This is a remote talk.

“Oppenheimer and the Cosmos”

J. Robert Oppenheimer interfaced with the universe during two time periods, and in between there was a war and the loss of his security clearance and influence on US government policy. I plan to provide a brief overview of his rather chaotic life, but with a focus on those two periods. First in 1937-39 he and students Serber, Volkoff, and Snyder were on the cutting edge of relativistic astrophysics, with studies of neutron stars and gravitational collapse to what we now call black holes. Second in the early 1960s, JRO participated in, and even organized, conferences on astrophysics topics, but was clearly not the aggressive scientist he had once been. A brief comparison sample of two particle physics conferences suggests that it was “in the matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer” (a verdict recently vacated), and not Hiroshima and Nagasaki that quashed his enthusiasm.

Host: Guy Worthey

ZOOM Information: Meeting ID: 965 8240 9398 • Passcode: physastro