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Wasley S. Krogdahl (1919–2009)

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**Wasley S. Krogdahl died on
Wednesday the 16th of September,
2009.**

Wasley S. Krogdahl was a native of Springfield, Illinois, the son of the late Swen and Grace Wasley Krogdahl. He received an SB degree from the University of Chicago in 1939. He then became a graduate student of the late Nobel Laureate Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, earning his Ph.D. in 1942 with a dissertation entitled “The Equilibrium of a Perfect Compressible Fluid Configuration.” His research initially involved problems of stellar configurations and, later in his career, cosmology.

Credit: Tina Krogdahl.

After receiving his degree, Krogdahl worked for the Naval Ordnance Laboratory from 1942 to 1944 and then Naval V-12 training from 1944 to 1945. Starting in 1945, he held a postdoctoral position at Yerkes Observatory, followed by a Lecturer position at Adler Planetarium and the Department of Astronomy of Northwestern University in Chicago from 1946 to 1958.

In 1958 Krogdahl moved to the University of Kentucky Department of Mathematics and Astronomy in Lexington, Kentucky, becoming a Professor of Physics in 1963 when Astronomy was moved to the Physics Department. He taught until 1986 when he became Professor Emeritus.

Krogdahl was a Harlow Shapley visiting lecturer of the American Astronomical Society and spoke at many universities in the Midwest and South.

He wrote an undergraduate astronomy textbook “Astronomical Universe: An Introductory Text in College Astronomy” first published in 1952, with a second edition in 1962. He also wrote a mathematics textbook entitled “Tensor Analysis: Fundamentals and Applications” published first in 1978, followed by a second edition in 2006.

Krogdahl was a musician and played the flute in the Evanston Civic Orchestra, the Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Lexington Community Orchestra.

On July 25, 1942, he married Margaret Kiess, the daughter of astronomer Carl C. Kiess. Margaret graduated from Swarthmore College in 1941 with an honors degree in mathematics. She was a member of the Swarthmore chapter of Sigma Xi since May 6, 1941. Margaret was also a student of Chandrasekhar's and received her Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago in 1944 with a dissertation entitled "Physical Problems Related to the Hydrogen and Helium Lines in Stellar Spectra". She then held a three-year fellowship at Yerkes Observatory before moving with Wasley to Lexington, where she helped him edit his publications in astronomy. She passed away on April 10, 2013, at the age of 92.

Survivors include a daughter, a son, and one grandchild.