

# The American Association of Variable Star Observers

It is a great pleasure to present the sixth **AAVSO William Tyler Olcott Distinguished Service Award** to

*John R. Percy*

"for his promotion of variable stars and astronomy education through his ongoing research, dedicated student and peer mentoring, consistent demonstration of and advocacy for best practices in teaching, leadership within the AAVSO and the astronomy and science education communities, and his commitment to public education."

Public outreach means teaching people, and that includes teaching teachers how to teach. For decades, John R. Percy has been deeply involved in astronomy and science education, research on pulsating variable stars and stellar evolution, and mentoring astronomy students at different levels.

John is the author of over 450 journal articles and book reviews in variable star astronomy and science education. He has also authored a textbook, *Understanding Variable Stars*, and edited numerous astronomy and education conference proceedings, including two related to the AAVSO: *The Study of Variable Stars Using Small Telescopes* and, with Janet Mattei and Christiaan Sterken, *Variable Star Research: An International Perspective*. He was also co-creator and co-director of the AAVSO's innovative and highly successful *Hands-On Astrophysics* curriculum and program.

Throughout his distinguished and fruitful career, John has recognized the potential of young people. Many of his own research programs have involved undergraduate and even high school students, and his academic responsibilities at the University of Toronto have long included supervising undergraduate research projects in variable star astronomy. He has mentored young programs, as well as young people, through his guidance of such ventures as the AAVSO Education and Outreach Committee and the journal *Astronomy Education Review*.

John's commitment to the AAVSO's mission is evident in his long service to the Association, including eleven years on the AAVSO Council, eight of them as an officer, and twenty-five years of committee work. In 1983, John, Janet Mattei, and Howard Landis established the AAVSO Photoelectric Photometry Committee and its program, and since then John has served as committee member and scientific advisor, as well as editor of the *AAVSO Photoelectric Photometry Newsletter*. John is also a member of the AAVSO Education and Outreach Committee.

John has served as a leader in the astronomical community through his presidency of the AAVSO, International Astronomical Union Commission 27 on Variable Stars and Commission 46 on Astronomy Education and Development, Astronomical Society of the Pacific, Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, and Royal Canadian Institute, and as a member of the American Astronomical Society Working Group for Professional-Amateur Collaboration.

The astronomical and educational communities and the public at large have been greatly enhanced through John's fascination with variable star astronomy, passion for science education, and belief in the capabilities of young people and in the value of variable star observing. We are proud to present him with the William Tyler Olcott Distinguished Service Award.

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David B. Williams  
President

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Arne A. Henden  
Director

*Presented at the AAVSO 96th Annual Meeting  
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