

Dr Judith L Pipher



The family of Judy Pipher regrets to announce her peaceful passing on February 21, 2022, with family by her side.

Judy was born June 18, 1940 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and demonstrated a scholarly aptitude at a young age. She studied astronomy and graduated from the University of Toronto, then continued with graduate studies at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. Judy's graduate work was in the then-new field of infrared and submillimeter astronomy. She earned her Ph.D from Cornell University in 1971 and joined the faculty of the Physics and Astronomy Department at the University of Rochester.

Judy's professional achievements are significant. She captured the first telescopic infrared pictures of starburst galaxies, was chosen to work on NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope designing its infrared detector arrays, enabling the study of the distant universe, capturing the evidence of forming stars and other deep space phenomena.

She was a distinguished member of numerous astronomical organizations and the author of more than 200 scientific articles and papers. The respect she garnered from her peers cannot be overstated. Recognition of her significant impact include the receipt of the Susan B Anthony Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002, induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 2007, Discover magazine stating in 2009 that she is "considered by many to be the mother of infrared astronomy" and in 2018, having Asteroid 306128 Pipher named in her honour.

Judy was also a significant contributor to her community of Seneca Falls, NY, including serving on the Board of Directors of the National Women's Hall of Fame, and serving as Officer and Board Member of the Seneca Museum of Waterways and Industry, where for several years she coordinated the organization's annual Gingerbread House program. The women of the community will miss her contributions to such organizations as the Red Tent Book Club, Ladies Who Lunch, and the Lake to Lake Women.

Judy was predeceased by her loving husband of more than 40 years, Robert Pipher, parents Earl Bancroft and Kathleen Bancroft (McGowan), and granddaughter Emma Hunter. She is lovingly remembered by siblings and spouses Linda Andrews (David), and Jay Bancroft (Wendy), step-children and spouses Tim Pipher (Johanna), Vicci Frederick (Michael), Wendi Hunter (Hugh) and Neil Pipher (Linda), 8 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

At Judy's request, a private family funeral will be held. A public celebration of Judy's life is being planned for the spring of 2022, details of which will be communicated soon.

As expressions of sympathy, donations may be made in Judy's name to the National Women's Hall of Fame, the Seneca Falls Library, Pathway Home Hospice, or a charity of your choice.