

The Press Democrat

Albert G. Wilson

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Albert G. Wilson, an astronomer, observatory director and discoverer of comets, galaxies and supernovae during a long career as a scientist, died at his Sebastopol home Monday. He was 94.

"He was certainly accomplished and contributed a lot," said George Kocher of Hillsboro, Ore., a friend for 52 years.

A native of Houston, Wilson grew up in Denver and Houston, where he attended Rice University and earned a bachelor of science in electrical engineering.

He was attending Caltech in Pasadena as a graduate student in mathematics when World War II broke out. He spent two years in the U.S. Navy installing radar systems on ships.

He returned to Caltech as a senior research fellow and began the search for supernovae.

He was a staff member at Caltech and the Mt. Wilson and Palomar observatories from 1949 to 1953, teaching graduate and undergraduate courses.

Wilson was in charge of the National Geographic Society-Palomar Observatory Sky Survey, during which he was a co-discoverer of the Leo I, Leo II, Draco and Ursa Minor Dwarfs galaxies.

He was also a director of the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Ariz., from 1954 to 1957, and served on the board of the Council of the American Astronomical Society and Board of Trustees of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific from 1955 to 1958.

"He was widely based in astronomy," Kocher said, dealing with planetary, stellar and galactic astronomy and cosmology.

"Cosmology is the big picture. He didn't have an idea of the beginning of the universe, but he had ideas of its structure. The big questions were the ones that interested him."

Wilson was a senior member of the Rand Corp. research staff in Santa Monica from 1957 to 1966, during which time he was co-founder of the science journal *Icarus*, became associate director of Douglas Advanced Research Laboratories in Huntington Beach in 1966, and taught astronomy and philosophy of science at University of Southern California and the University of California, Los Angeles, beginning in 1972.

He was married to Frances Malich from 1947 to 1957 and they had four children. He was married to Donna Scott from 1961 until her death in 1998.

He lived in Sebastopol for 25 years.

He is survived by children Nan Rinker of Bakersfield, Arthur Wilson of Flagstaff, Ariz., Charles Wilson of Houston, and Lorinda Troxler of Pittsburgh, Pa., nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

— Bob Norberg