

John Hugh Seiradakis (1948-2020)

With great sorrow we announce the passing of Prof. John Hugh Seiradakis, a respected and beloved colleague and professor and a founding member of our Society. John Hugh Seiradakis was not only the second President of our Society for four years (1998-2002), but he also masterminded its establishment and wrote the first document that eventually led to our Society's Constitution. In this respect Hel.A.S. can be considered as his brain-child.

John Hugh Seiradakis was born in Chania, Crete on March 5, 1948. He obtained his degree in Physics at the University of Athens (1971) and he continued his education at the Victoria University of Manchester, where he obtained his M.S. (1973) and his Ph.D. (1975) on the subject of pulsars observations under the supervision of Dr. John G. Davies.

He worked as a researcher at the Max-Planck Institut fuer Radioastronomie, Bonn, at the University of Hamburg and at the University of California, San Diego. In 1985 he was appointed Associate Professor at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and in 1996 he was promoted to full Professor. In 2011 he was elected Director of the Laboratory of Astronomy of the Aristotle University, a position that he held until his retirement in 2015, after which he was appointed Professor Emeritus. His domain of expertise included neutron stars, neutral hydrogen modeling in nearby galaxies, the center of our Galaxy, flare stars, Lunar Transient Phenomena and Archaeoastronomy. He has published more than 74 scientific papers in refereed journals and more than 80 papers in conference proceedings and special volumes, as well as three University-level textbooks. He has represented Greece in large European networks (OPTICON, ILIAS, CRAF, etc).

In December 2005, the highest EU prize Descartes was awarded to the Neutron Stars research network, "PULSE", in which he was one of the founding members.

He was very active in promoting Astronomy to high school students and, in collaboration with the Society for Astronomy and Space at Volos, brought the best students to the International Olympiads of Astronomy and Astrophysics. He also promoted the science of Astronomy to the general public through conferences and popularized articles. Many of our colleagues discovered their inclination in Astronomy because of his inspiring and good-tempered personality. He will always be remembered by us all for his generosity, his leadership and for his selfless contribution to all things astronomical.