

OPENING LECTURE

Sunday August 16, 2026
Opening Ceremony



Alex Wolszczan

Penn State University, United States

Exoplanets in the Radio

BIO AUTHOR

Dr. Alexander Wolszczan's research interests focus on planets around evolved stars and stellar remnants and constraints on extraterrestrial life.

He has also worked on topics in relativistic gravitation, pulsars, brown dwarfs, and the physics of the interstellar medium. He received a doctorate in physics in 1975 from the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, Poland. He held positions at the Max-Planck-Institut fuer Radioastronomie in Bonn, Germany, the National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center at Cornell University and Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico, and at Princeton University. At present, he is an Atherton Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics at the Pennsylvania State University and a courtesy professor at the University of Central Florida. Until 2019, he was the founding director of Penn State's Center for Exoplanets and Habitable Worlds. Dr. Wolszczan is best known for his discovery, in 1992, and a subsequent confirmation, of the first planets orbiting a star other than the Sun. He is also a discoverer and co-discoverer of many pulsars and giant planets around evolved stars.

Dr. Wolszczan has received an annual award from the Foundation of Polish Science in 1992, "The Best of What's New" Grand Award of the Popular Science Magazine in 1994, the Penn State Faculty Scholar Medal for Outstanding Achievement in 1995, and the Beatrice M. Tinsley Prize of the American Astronomical Society in 2000. He is a recipient of the Marian Smoluchowski Medal by the Polish Physical Society and of the Bohdan Paczynski medal by the Polish Astronomical Society. Dr. Wolszczan is featured on one of the series of sixteen postage stamps issued in Poland in 2001 to commemorate the Polish Millennium. He is a corresponding member of the Polish Academy of Sciences, a legacy fellow of the American Astronomical Society, a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a member of the International Union of Radio Science, and the International Astronomical Union.

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