

## OBITUARY



### **María Estela de Lara Andrade**

On April 25, B.S María Estela de Lara Andrade passed away in the city of Ensenada, Baja California. She worked for more than forty years as an Academic Technician at the Institute of Astronomy (IA) of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), where she carried out various tasks in support of astronomical research, but where she also made her own original contributions. While still a student, Estela joined the IA

staff in 1973 to write her Bachelor thesis in Physics. Under the direction of Dr. Carlos Chavarría Kleinhenn, she developed a research topic suggested by Dr. Harold L. Johnson. She concluded this work in 1976, and successfully defended it at the Faculty of Sciences of the UNAM. The title of her thesis was “Photoelectric Photometry with a Silicon Detector”. Since her first staff appointment she became an assiduous user of the two telescopes installed at the then nascent National Astronomical Observatory, developed by UNAM on the top of the Sierra de San Pedro Mártir, Baja California. She thus became a pioneer at this new observatory. Due to the frequency and number of observations required for her work, in 1975 she decided to settle down in Ensenada, where she also formed a solid family.

The photoelectric photometry of young stars was her main astronomical research subject. More than twenty research papers published in specialized international journals reflect her contribution. She also participated with presentations at various scientific congresses.

Her interest in disseminating astronomical knowledge was enduring, which is why she dedicated an important part of her time to outreach work, especially aimed at children. Her work enabled many children to safely enjoy the total solar eclipse of 1991 and the passage of Venus in front of the solar disk in 2012. In addition to giving a large number of talks, she organized conference cycles, which over time have become institutional. She was also a co-author of a couple of books. Starting in 2008, and until her retirement in 2014, she was co-editor of the *Gaceta Ensenada*, a periodic journal that UNAM publishes for that city.

In 2011, her work was deservedly valued, when UNAM awarded her the “Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz” recognition.

Marco Arturo Moreno Corral