

1971, she was appointed Visiting Research Associate at the Leander McCormick Observatory of the University of Virginia.

In a memorial to her, the Faculty of Randolph-Macon Women's College stated, "Professor Risley was a woman of impeccable integrity and outstanding professional competence who spent more than half of her life making important contributions to the life and growth of Randolph-Macon Women's College." A scholar of tremendous research potential, Marguerite Risley nevertheless looked upon teaching as her primary responsibility, a dedication that modern harassed educational administrators would like to see emulated.

Dorrit Hoffleit
Yale University Observatory

Walter Orr Roberts, 1915–1990

Walter Orr Roberts was born in West Bridgewater, Massachusetts on August 20, 1915 and died in Boulder, Colorado on March 12, 1990 at age 74. In 1938 he was graduated from Amherst College in western Massachusetts and that year entered graduate school at Harvard. In 1940 he married Janet Smock, who was to be his wife for 50 years. Immediately following their marriage he moved with her to the high mountains of Colorado where he worked to complete an observational thesis for a Harvard PhD involving solar activity and a coronagraph of the Lyot design which he had built and tested as a Harvard graduate student under the tutelage of Donald Menzel.

The Roberts lived at Climax, near Leadville, for seven years, and there were born three of their four children: David, in 1943; Alan, in 1944; and Jennifer, in 1946. A fourth, Jonathan, was born in Boulder in 1951.

In Climax was also born the High Altitude Observatory, which was established with administrative and support services in Boulder in 1947, replacing what had been, for seven years, a Coronagraph Station of the Harvard College Observatory. In 1960, when HAO had become a solar observatory of world renown, Roberts was asked to create and direct what was to become the National Center for Atmospheric Research, which he did, on the conditions that it would also be located in Boulder and that it would incorporate the High Altitude Observatory as a part of it.

For 8 years, about the same period of time for which he had directed HAO, Roberts served as director of NCAR. For the ensuing 6 years he was the President of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, NCAR's parent organization. In 1973 he left UCAR to direct the Program on Food, Climate, and the World's Future for the Aspen Institute, for another 8 years. At that time he was 66, and had been working as a scientist and scientific administrator for 41 years. For the remaining nine years of his life, and to its very end, although ostensibly

retired, he continued as a world leader in many activities, as President Emeritus of UCAR.

Roberts was a founder of the Department of Astrogeophysics at the University of Colorado and took a personal research interest for many years in the study of influences of the Sun on weather and climate. He was also one of those who worked throughout the long years of East-West political tensions to maintain scientific contacts with many colleagues in the Soviet Union; he visited there often and through his scientific reputation in that country was to a degree responsible for the establishment of the Soviet coronagraph station at Kislovodsk in the Caucasus. In the later years of the Cold War he championed the use of direct electronic communications between individuals in the two countries, and led courses that bridged the two countries through computer communications.

In his lifetime, Roberts received many honors, including 10 honorary doctorates — the first in 1958, when he was but 43, from Ripon College in Wisconsin, and the second, the following year, from Amherst. He was elected president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1968, when he was 53. He received many medals and prizes. The land on which the NCAR Mesa Laboratory now stands now bears the name "Roberts Mesa." A year before his death, in 1989, he was granted a medal from the United Nations Environment Programme, as perhaps the deepest and most encompassing tribute for a life of professional attainments in the interest of humankind.

Although known to the world as a scientist, and an educator and humanist and philanthropist, Walter Orr Roberts was to those who knew him best a builder: first from the pieces of a partly-built coronagraph, then an observing station, and an observatory, and a collection of new staffs and new buildings, and new institutions, each better than the one before.

It is remarkable how he did it. At the Climax Molybdenum Company, 50 years ago, at 25, he succeeded in enlisting the support of a mining company to support astronomy: on the basis, we can be sure, of the infectious enthusiasm that would later make him as beloved among industrialists as in science. Funding for the major observatory building at Climax, built in 1954, and for a new HAO building on the campus of the university, which he built in 1960, came not from NASA or federal or state grants, but from 35 private and foundation contributors, whose trust and affection Roberts had earned while in his late 30's and early 40's. They included the Great Western Sugar Company, The Adolph Coors Company, and The Denver Union Stockyard.

Roberts was a joyful enthusiast who made what was hard look easy. For twenty years he held the High Altitude Observatory together through a sequence of hard times, in such a way that once his staff worked without pay for a month to keep the observatory going. To what he built, as to whom he met, he remained forever a friend. To meet him was to feel important.

Roberts enjoyed world renown and was at the