

**The 2015 Henry R. and Gladys V. Irons Lecture  
in Physics and Astronomy**

The Irons Lectures are free talks intended for the general public: high school students and teachers, college students and teachers, friends, neighbors, and anyone interested in science and science education.



Professor Sandra Faber

University of California, Santa Cruz  
UCO/Lick Observatory

***The Gift of Cosmic Time: Opportunity  
Seized or Opportunity Squandered?***

**2 P.M., Saturday March 28, 2015**

**Physics Lecture Hall, Busch Campus, Rutgers University**

A hundred years ago, astronomers did not know about the Big Bang, or that our Milky Way is a galaxy in a vast sea of billions of other galaxies. Our cosmic roots were a total mystery. Since then, a host of powerful telescopes in space and on the ground have revealed our cosmic past -- how the Galaxy was formed, how the Sun and Earth were born, and how the very atoms that comprise our bodies and our planet were synthesized. Standing on this firm knowledge of the past, we can now look ahead to predict our cosmic future, and it is bright ahead. We appear to have been given the most precious gift of all -- cosmic time -- hundreds of millions of years of it. The supreme challenge is now before us: will we use this gift, or squander it? To what extent do we owe allegiance to a cause that is much larger than any of us: realizing the cosmic potential of a powerfully sentient species. Our growing cosmic understanding has finally raised the most profound moral question ever faced by our species -- where is humanity headed?

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The general public is cordially invited to this lecture, which will be given in the Physics Lecture Hall on the Busch Campus of Rutgers University. Free parking is available in lots 53A, 53 and 64. Driving and parking directions are available at the Physics Department website at <http://www.physics.rutgers.edu>. For further information, contact Nancy DeHaan (nancy@physics.rutgers.edu, phone: 848-445-8973)