

# Stories of Women Stargazers



**PLANETARIUM**

**Department of Physics  
(College of Science)**

**Dr. Dora Musielak**

**MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2009**

**12:00 - 1:00 pm**

**Library Parlor, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor**

**UT Arlington Library**



*Women's Studies  
Program*

**The talk is open to everyone and will be followed by a reception**

Today we know that there are billions of galaxies in the Universe. We now have proof that there are planets circling other stars. But at the dawn of the seventeenth century, astronomers knew of no more celestial bodies than the ancient stargazers. Until the advent of the telescope, the sky contained one sun, one moon, five planets, and a fixed array of stars arranged in whimsical constellations. Then, when Galileo turned his telescope skywards, the narrow view of the cosmos widened. For the first time in the history of the world, physics, astronomy, and much of mathematics went from mythological musings to rigorous disciplines. And women were part of the discovery and wonder of that era when the telescope opened up a new window to the heavens and put humankind a bit closer to the stars.



The veil of time now falls over the faces of many women stargazers of the past and many of them may never be known by us. But for sure their names are written in the stars they observed in the stillness of night. This talk will examine the lives of two women scientists of the seventeenth century. One who understood the planetary laws of Kepler and provided a more elegant solution to Kepler's Problem. And another who became a skillful astronomer, observing the heavens and collaborating with the great Hevelius.

**Dr. Dora Musielak** is a rocket scientist by training and an enthusiastic promoter of the history of women in science and mathematics. She has spent her career conducting research in rocket propulsion, and now she works for ATK, an aerospace company that helped NASA design, test, and build the planet-hunter telescope Kepler and the rocket motors that powered its ascent into space. Dr. Musielak has also taught engineering, science, and mathematics courses at several universities, most recently at the University of Texas at Arlington. She is a NASA Fellow, Associate Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and a member of the Planetary Society.