



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

*Laurea Honoris Causa*

***MARGARET JOAN GELLER***

*Fisica e cosmologa*

***PRESENTAZIONE***  
***PROF. SILVANO MASSAGLIA***  
*Direttore del Dipartimento di Fisica*

*Aula Magna Rettorato*  
*10 Aprile 2017*



***Magnifico Rettore  
Colleagues  
Ladies and Gentlemen  
Dr. Geller***

I am very pleased to be director of the Physics Department while Dr. Margaret Geller is being awarded the ***Honorary Degree in Physics at the University of Turin***. In fact, she has a long lasting collaboration with our Department that is very active in the fields of ***Cosmology, Astrophysics and Astroparticle Physics***. I personally had the honor to meet her during one of her visits to our Department.

***I would like now to briefly outline her scientific career.***

Dr. Margaret Geller received her B.A. degree in Physics from ***University of California Berkeley*** in 1970 and her ***Ph.D. in Physics from Princeton University*** in 1975 (as graduate student of Jim Peebles, one of the most outstanding cosmologists of the last century).

She joined the permanent staff of the ***Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory***, which is part of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, in 1983.

With her pioneering galaxy redshift surveys, Dr. Margaret Geller simply initiated our understanding of the ***large scale structure*** of the Universe.

She also pioneered the study of the internal dynamics of galaxy clusters and the connection between the properties of galaxies and their environment.

She recently contributed to the discovery of the hypervelocity stars in the Milky Way. These stars have been accelerated through a sort of slingshot effect, reaching velocities of the order of a few millions of kilometers per hour, while flying by the central Supermassive Black Hole that lies at the center of our Galaxy.

All these fields are still at the forefront of Astrophysics, and Dr. Geller keeps being very active with relevant contributions to the progress of these areas of research.

Last but not least, she is very brilliant in mentoring young scientists: most of her graduate students have had outstanding careers. In addition, she is an extraordinarily gifted science communicator, as just illustrated by prof. Ferrari.

As recognition of her outstanding scientific career, dr. Geller is member of the ***National Academy of Sciences*** and of ***the American Academy of Arts and Sciences***.

She received many awards during her career, I can mention:

***The MacArthur Fellowship*** (1990), which is a prize awarded to individuals from any field for, I quote, “*exceptional creativity, promise for important future advances based on a track record of significant accomplishment, and potential for the fellowship to facilitate subsequent creative work.*”

***the Magellanic Premium*** of the American Philosophical Society (2008),

***the James Craig Watson Medal*** (2010),

*the Russell Lectureship* of the American Astronomical Society (2010),

*the Lilienfeld Prize* of the American Physical Society (2012),

*the Schwarzschild Medal* (2014) of the German Astronomical Society.

It is thus to acknowledge all these outstanding achievements that we gathered here to confer to Dr. Geller the Honorary Degree in Physics.