Address of the President (Dr C. Jordan) on the Presentation of the Jackson–Gwilt Medal to Dr J. A. Mattei on Friday 1996 March 8

The Jackson–Gwilt Medal and Gift for 1995 is awarded to Dr J. A. Mattei for her contributions as Director of the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO).

Dr Mattei was born in Turkey, and was educated at Brandeis University and the University of Virginia in the USA, and Ege University in Turkey, from which she received her Doctorate in 1982.

Her area of research is cataclysmic variable stars, and she became Director of the AAVSO in 1973. Over the past 23 years the work of the AAVSO has increased enormously in volume and complexity. The AAVSO is now the largest organization of variable star observers in the world, with members in over 40 countries. It receives and archives over 250,000 observations each year. The distinguishing feature of the AAVSO is that its members are primarily amateur astronomers. As Director, she is the only professional astronomer on the staff, and is responsible for the quality control of the data, for scientific liaison with observers worldwide, and the major AAVSO publications. The AAVSO supports the work of professional astronomers, for example by organizing coordinated optical observations of stars being studied from satellites, and receives hundreds of requests for data and services each year.

Thanks to her unique combination of efficiency, diplomacy and warmth, and her unlimited energy and enthusiasm, the work of amateur astronomers has been focussed and coordinated to form an invaluable asset to astronomy.

Dr Mattei, it gives me great pleasure to present you with the Jackson–Gwilt Medal and Gift.