

SPECIAL AWARD PRESENTATIONS

The following two poems were presented to Treasurer Theodore Wales and Vice-President Keith Danskin, respectively, at the Banquet of the 75th Anniversary Meeting on August 9, 1986. They were written by AAVSO Technical Assistant Michael Saladyga. Mr. Wales and Mr. Danskin were each presented with a plaque mounted with the poem written in his honor and a message of gratitude and appreciation from the Association.

SESTINA - DE RERUM NATURA

"When beggars die, there are no comets seen."
--Shakespeare

Dedicated to Ted Wales, AAVSO Treasurer

Most VSO'ers tire to hear of money,
Would rather see things run their natural order
Believing that in time will come full measure
Some great outburst of funds that will not vary,
And sight no more be dimmed by that green paper
That always seems to limit all our pleasure.

The AAVSO has thrived on pleasure.
It's sky-sweeping we like, not raking money.
Besides the stars, we like to work with paper,
All in the cause of scientific order,
Make long-term-curves of all those stars that vary,
That's how we always reap our fullest measure.

But how on earth can any star we measure
When all we think is 'funds' instead of 'pleasure'?
If VSO will never cease to vary
'Twixt lots of stars and hardly any money
Then there's not much that can be said for order,
Our Constitution's only good on paper.

The first plea came with Argelander's paper,
When what he wanted was more folks to measure.
Those were the days, when just one earnest order
Could launch a venture that could give such pleasure.
Not once did Argelander mention money
(But then they thought not many stars would vary).

Today we know that every star will vary.
Never more true was Argelander's paper,
Except that now we always ask for money
Before we dare to ask more folks to measure.
Would Campbell, Pickering, or Payne take pleasure
To see how dollars dictate Freid'rich's order?

If VSO could rule the stars on order
We'd keep the skies so clear, no nights would vary,
And one more thing would also give us pleasure:
To make each star we count become green paper;
Not stars, but currency, we'd gladly measure
If every star that falls would turn to money.

To gain some pleasure from these dreams on paper,
We ought re-order Shakespeare some small measure:
"Where no stars vary, everyone has money."

L'HOMAGE A KEITH

Dedicated to Keith Danskin

VSO's business may be the stars,
But all brightness is not beyond Mars.
So this day let us speak
Of one member named Keith
Danskin who has found this Headquarters.

Tho' a VSO Member, 'tis true,
And Keith comes to us out of the blue,
Neither stars nor air-cars
Do we wish to regard,
But this Headquarters Building so new.

Were it not for Keith's timely discov'ry
VSO just might still be "all at sea,"
Quietly drowning in dust,
Data oozing with must,
And with nowhere to go 'cept for coffee.

Dare we finally say it's Keith Danskin
Who has helped to save VSO's own skin.
Not with 'scope, nor mere hope
Danskin's brought us to cope,
But his news that this building was open.

L'ENVOI

Maybe poets have no real business
Counting stars (just ask Janet about this),
But this once let us say
In our variable way,
That Keith Danskin's one Star at the MAX-est!

AAVSO MERIT AWARDS

AAVSO Merit Awards were presented to three members, Thomas A. Cragg, M. Daniel Overbeek, and F. Lancaster Hiett, at the 75th Anniversary Banquet. Texts of the awards presented are as follow:

"The 25th Merit Award to Thomas A. Cragg in recognition of his 41 years of active membership, his Chairmanship of the AAVSO Cepheid Committee, his valuable service on the AAVSO Council, and his dedicated observing since 1945, yielding over 109,000 observations of variable stars."

"The 26th Merit Award to Michiel Daniel Overbeek in recognition of his dedicated devotion to observing variable stars in the southern sky since 1952 resulting in over 70,000 observations of variable stars, his excellent guidance of many variable star observers in South Africa, and his valuable service on the AAVSO Council."

"The 27th Merit Award to F. Lancaster Hiett in recognition of his faithful membership since 1936, his devotion to and support of the goals of the Association, and his continuous observing record for fifty years resulting in over 90,000 observations of variable stars."