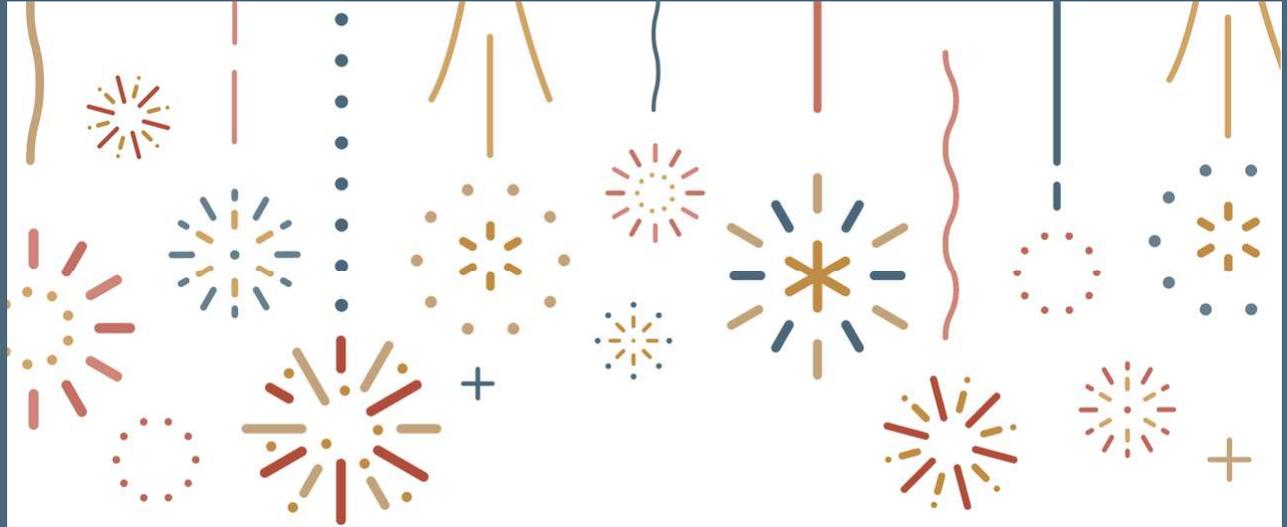




THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

Astronomy & Steward Observatory



A Year of Discovery: Looking Back at Steward Observatory's 2025

What a year it has been!

As we approach the new year, we reflect on an extraordinary 2025—a year that reinforced Steward Observatory's position at the forefront of astronomical discovery and innovation.

Our community earned prestigious recognition this year. [Regents Professor Marcia Rieke received the American Astronomical Society's Henry Norris Russell Lectureship](#), honoring her influential career and fundamental contributions to infrared astronomy. [Deputy Director Dennis Zaritsky was named Regents Professor](#), the University of Arizona's highest faculty honor, recognizing his groundbreaking work mapping dark matter through dwarf galaxies and his proof of

dark matter's existence. [We're proud of our many faculty and student accolades—you can read about them here!](#)

From our labs and facilities came instruments now exploring the cosmos. NASA's [SPHEREx](#) mission launched in March with sophisticated software from our Arizona Cosmology Lab, mapping hundreds of millions of galaxies to answer questions about the first trillionth of a second after the Big Bang. The **Vera C. Rubin Observatory** achieved first light in June, equipped with a 27-foot [mirror fabricated at our Richard F. Caris Mirror Lab](#) and more than 120 imaging sensors—nearly half the camera's array—manufactured by our [Imaging Technology Laboratory](#).

Our imaging breakthroughs pushed the boundaries of what we can see and understand. Using the MagAO-X instrument at the Magellan Telescope, we captured the first-ever [photograph of a baby planet](#) embedded in a ring around its star—confirming long-held theories about planetary formation. Our [Large Binocular Telescope Interferometer](#) produced the highest-resolution direct images ever taken of an active galactic nucleus, revealing the intricate dynamics of supermassive black holes. And our researchers contributed to the discovery of **Eos**, a massive molecular cloud just 300 light-years away—the closest known stellar nursery to Earth—[featured in the *New York Times*](#) for revolutionizing how we detect star-forming regions through molecular hydrogen.

As we turn the page to 2026, these achievements remind us that the work we do today illuminates the universe for generations to come. Thank you for being part of this remarkable journey.



There's still time to donate

2025 isn't over yet, so if you're wanting to make any last minute contributions before the end of year there's still time.

Donations made online or post marked December 31, 2023

are tax deductible this year.

Check payable: University of Arizona Foundation

Mail: Steward Observatory 933 N. Cherry Ave., N205F Tucson, AZ 85721

[Donate Online Now](#)



Steward Observatory Public Evening Lecture - Spring 2026

Monday, January 12

Weird Universe: Everything We Don't Know about Space (and Why it's Important)

Dr. Erika Hamden, Steward Observatory and UA Space Institute

Book-signing Event After the Lecture

Monday, January 26

Dead Planets around Dead Stars

Dr. Laura Rogers, National Optical / IR Laboratory



Wishing you a New Year filled with clear skies, bright stars, and discoveries that inspire you every day.



For more information or questions contact: Cathi Duncan cduncanf@arizona.edu 520-621-1320

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