

CHANT MEDAL – WARREN FINLAY

The Chant Medal of the Society was established in 1940 in appreciation of the great work of the late [Prof. C. A. Chant](#) in furthering the interests of astronomy in Canada. This medal is awarded, not more than once a year, to an amateur astronomer resident in Canada on the basis of the value of the work carried out in astronomy and closely allied fields of the original investigation and specifically not for the services of the Society, worthy though these may be.

Warren Finlay's wide ranging, unique and impressive achievements in astronomy over the past 25 years firmly place him among the most accomplished amateur astronomers in Canada. In 2023 he completed observing the Herschel 2500 list – approximately 2500 objects, a feat that took him 22 years. In total, he has observed more than 3,300 NGC objects, in addition to more than 500 supernovae, comets, and other deep sky objects. In 2022 he created the "Brightest 2500 Northern NGC" list. He is the inventor of the astronomy bimarathon which involves the twin tasks of observing 110 deep-sky objects and running a regular marathon (42.195 km) between sunset and sunrise in a single night. He is the only person known to have completed a bimarathon. In 2016 he completed a Messier bimarathon by star hopping with a 10" Dobsonian and binoculars. In 2018 he repeated that difficult feat in Australia but instead with all southern deep-sky objects. He is the inventor of the Herschel marathon which requires observing 110 Herschel objects in a single night. He completed his Herschel marathon by observing a selection of the dimmest Herschel 2500 objects on March 16/17, 2023. Details of his observations have been shared with other RASC members.

Warren is the author of the book *Concise Catalog of Deep Sky Objects: Astrophysical Information for 550 Galaxies, Clusters, and Nebulae* (Springer). Now in its 2nd edition, the book has sold more than 5000 copies. From 2006 to 2008 he co-authored with Dr. Douglas Hube the bimonthly *Deep Sky Contemplations* column in the *Journal* of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

In 2004 he founded the Northern Prairie Star Party, a popular annual amateur astronomy gathering in Alberta. He was its Director until 2009 and has been a member of its organizing committee ever since. He is also the visionary behind the Black Nugget Lake Observatory, conceived by him nearly 20 years ago. Over the past seven years he managed the team that built the 14-foot domed observatory, a visitor's centre, and a 32-inch diameter Unyk-Drew Telescope (UDT) that saw first light in 2023. The UDT is one of the largest telescopes at a dark site in Canada that is available for public viewing.

Warren is also an award-winning astrophotographer, having received the SkyNews' Grand Prize Annual Astrophoto Award (2004) and Best Tripod-Mounted Unguided Photo (2021): as well as Honorable Mention in Canadian Geographics' Skyward Photo Contest (2014). His nightscape photos have been selected for inclusion in the annual RASC Observers Calendar.

Warren was a recipient of the RASC's Simon Newcomb Award (2006) and the RASC Edmonton Centre's President's Award (2019), Observer of the Year Award (2020 and 2016), Franklin Loehde Project of the Year Award (2016, 2005, and 2003), Bryce Hartwell Memorial Award for Excellence in Astroimaging (2014), and the George Moore's Memorial Award for Excellence in Public Education (2007). It would be difficult to imagine a more deserving recipient of the RASC Chant Medal.

Nominated by: Douglas P. Hube, Alister Ling