

**The George P. & Cynthia W. Mitchell**

**Institute for Fundamental Physics and Astronomy**

**Texas Cosmology Network Meeting**

**UT Austin, Friday September 15'th**



**George P. Mitchell**

Trinity College, Cambridge, August 2006

The George P. & Cynthia W. Mitchell Institute for Fundamental Physics was founded in September 2002, as the result of a very generous gift from George Mitchell. This set up an endowment to initiate the Institute. He has also given endowment for several Chairs in the Physics Department, including

- Stephen Hawking Chair in Fundamental Physics (Pope)
- Mitchell-Heep Chair in Theoretical High-Energy Physics (Nanopoulos)
- Mitchell/Heep Chair in Experimental High Energy Physics (McIntyre)
- Mitchell/Munnerlyn/Heep Chair in Observational Astronomy/ Cosmology (Suntzeff)

Additional endowments include the establishment of

- Post-doctoral Fellowship in Astronomy
- Astronomy Lecture Series
- Astronomy Colloquium Series

The Mitchell Institute hosts Workshops and Conferences, and longer-term visiting researchers. Some of the activities so far have included

- 2003: Workshop and Conference on Holography and the AdS/CFT Correspondence
- 2004: Workshop and Conference on String Cosmology
- 2004: Mitchell Symposium on Observational Cosmology
- 2004: Dark Matter in Astro and Particle Physics
- 2005: Quantum Gravity Phenomenology
- 2006: Mitchell Symposium on Astronomy, Cosmology and Fundamental Physics

## Recent developments in the Institute and the Physics Department include

- Initiation of an Astronomy group: Nick Suntzeff, Lifan Wang,...
- Texas A&M is a founding partner in the Giant Magellan Telescope (funded by George Mitchell)
- Recruitment of new faculty in High-Energy Physics: Bhaskar Dutta, Katrine Becker, Melanie Becker
- Establishment of a collaboration between the Mitchell Institute and the Cambridge Centre for Theoretical Cosmology (CTC). This is funded very generously by an annual gift from George Mitchell, matched by Texas A&M University. The CTC is being set up in Cambridge by Stephen Hawking, Gary Gibbons, Malcolm Perry, Neil Turok, Paul Shellard, and others. The Cambridge-Mitchell Collaboration will host Conferences and Workshops in Cambridge and at Texas A&M; exchange visits of faculty, postdocs and students. The inaugural Conference, on *Time-Dependent Backgrounds in String and M-theory*, took place in Cambridge in August 2006
- George Mitchell has given further major funding, matched by the University, for a new Mitchell Institute building and a new Physics Department building. The Mitchell Institute will include a 200-seat auditorium, which will allow us to run large conferences at any time.





- We hope that the model of the collaboration with the Centre for Theoretical Cosmology in Cambridge will be followed with further collaborative enterprises in Astronomy, Cosmology and High-Energy physics.
- With the growing footprint of Astronomy and Cosmology in Texas, we look forward to a very exciting future...