



From the Editor

As outlined by Prof. Ken Kellermann in the lead article in this issue, this year “marks the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of quasars. It was on 5 February, 1963, that Maarten Schmidt at Caltech recognized that the spectrum of the magnitude 13 apparently stellar object identified with the radio source 3C 273 could be most straightforwardly interpreted by a redshift of 0.16. . . . Schmidt’s discovery changed extragalactic astronomy in a fundamental way.” We celebrate this discovery with the publication of several reviews on quasars spread over the 2013 March and June issues of the Bulletin of the Astronomical Society of India.

We would also like to take this opportunity to pay our respects to Prof. Mahendra Singh Vardya (1933–2013), who passed away on 2013 January 20. He was the first Editor of the Bulletin of Astronomical Society of India and nurtured it for about eight years. A brief write up on his life circulated by the TIFR Alumni Association (TAA) is reproduced here, with permission from TAA.

“Prof. Mahendra Singh Vardya, former member of the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics, TIFR, passed away in Mumbai on 20 January 2013. Prof. Vardya was internationally known, for his work on stellar atmosphere. He obtained Ph.D. from the Yale University, USA in 1959. After spending some time at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Joint Institute of Laboratory Astrophysics, Boulder, USA he joined TIFR in 1966. He started the Theoretical Astrophysics Group at TIFR to supplement the activity in radio and X-ray astronomy. He did pioneering work in calculating the opacity in stellar atmospheres, particularly, the effect of negative ions and molecules. His low temperature opacity tables were widely used in stellar structure calculations. He was a co-author of the pioneering paper on stellar evolution with Prof. Henyey. He was the founding member of the Astronomical Society of India and was also the first editor of the Bulletin of the Astronomical Society of India.”

D. J. Saikia, R. Srianand and D. A. Green
Editors of this issue