

## PREFACE

Since 1967, the most prominent events of a General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union are published in a separate volume. The Highlights of Astronomy (volume 9) report on the major scientific presentations made at the XXist General Assembly July 23-August 1, 1991, Buenos Aires, Argentina. The present volume contains the texts of the three invited Discourses and of the papers presented during seven Joint Discussion Meetings and eight Joint Commission Meetings. The invited Discourses were arranged by the IAU Executive Committee and the Joint Discourses and Commission Meetings by the respective chairpersons. The overall responsibility of the General Assembly was carried out by the IAU General Secretary (1988-1991), Dr. D. McNally.

I am indebted to the authors of the invited Discourses, to the organizers and editors of the scientific sessions for having provided me with all the material for publication in due time. I want to particularly acknowledge the case with which Dr. J.H. Hughes, who unfortunately died a few days ago from cancer, prepared and checked until the last few weeks the report on the new IAU Reference System. This report itself concludes long and difficult discussions among IAU members that he led in a wise and clear-sighted manner.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the work of Dr. D. McNally in organizing a successful XXist General Assembly. I also wish to thank the Meeting chairpersons, the speakers and all the participants for having contributed to the liveliness of this scientific forum.

A special word of warm thanks goes to Mrs. M. Orine for her help in editing this volume.

Jacqueline Bergeron  
General Secretary, IAU  
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