

Robert Park, continued

Society's Washington, DC office, which he opened at the request of the APS during a 1982 sabbatical. He resumed his full-time position as Professor of Physics at the University of Maryland in 2006.

In 1998, the APS presented its Joseph A. Burton Forum Award to Park for his outstanding contributions to the public understanding or resolution of issues involving the interface of physics and society.

Dr. Park has produced *What's New* every Friday but one since June 29, 1984. The sole exception followed a freak accident on a calm overcast September day in 2000, when a dead oak tree fell and seriously injured him during his Sunday jog. He recovered after multiple surgeries and a long rehabilitation. While many hoped his near death experience would result in a spiritual conversion, he only grew worse.

Dr. Park is a Fellow of the APS, the American Vacuum Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and CSI (publisher of *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine).

His latest book is *Superstition*, slated for a September 2008 release.

Previous recipients of the Philip J. Klass Award:

2006 – Dr. Michael Shermer
2007 – James Randi

The National Capital Area Skeptics is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit, educational and scientific membership organization that promotes critical thinking and scientific understanding.

National Capital Area Skeptics
PO Box 8428
Silver Spring, MD 20907
www.ncas.org

NCAS Philip J. Klass Award March 2008

For outstanding contributions in promoting critical thinking and scientific understanding.



National Capital Area Skeptics

20/20 SINCE 1987

About Philip J. Klass (1919-2005)



Philip J. Klass was one of the original conveners of NCAS in 1987 and was an important long-time mentor to our organization. In 1976 he, along with Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, James Randi, Ray Hyman, Martin Gardner, Paul Kurtz, Sidney Hook and others, was a founding member of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), now called CSI, the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry. He was one of the world's foremost experts on UFOs.

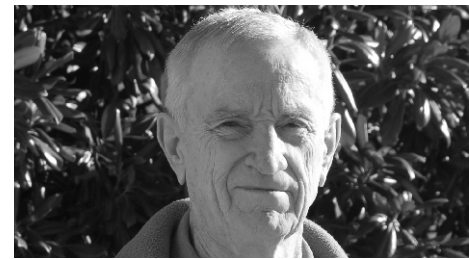
Trained as an electrical engineer, Klass was senior avionics editor of *Aviation Week & Space Technology* for over thirty years. He received numerous awards for his work as a technical journalist, from such organizations as the Aviation/Space Writers Association and the Royal Aeronautical Society, and was named a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. He wrote one of the first books about spy satellites, *Secret Sentries in Space* (1971).

Klass was known for explaining UFO sightings with pragmatic explanations. Although his detractors styled him a "debunker," in fact, debunking was the consequence, not the purpose, of his efforts. He sought to investigate "flying-saucer" reports and thus convert UFOs (unidentified flying objects) to IFOs (identified flying objects) such as celestial bodies, research balloons, advertising planes, and even secret aircraft. His books on UFOs include *UFOs Explained* (1974), *The Real Roswell Crashed-Saucer Coverup* (1997), and *UFO Abductions: A Dangerous Game* (1989).

In 1999, the International Astronomical Union named Minor Planet (asteroid) 7277 "Klass" in his honor.

NCAS created the Philip J. Klass Award in 2006. The first recipient was Michael Shermer.

NCAS Philip J. Klass Award Recipient Prof. Robert L. Park



For over a quarter century, physicist Robert L. Park's prominent skeptical message has reached the public through op-ed pages of major newspapers, appearances in radio and television programs, and his often controversial *What's New* feature on science policy issues (posted weekly at BobPark.org).

His first non-technical book, *Voodoo Science: The Road from Foolishness to Fraud* (published in 2000 by Oxford University Press and translated into ten languages), synthesized much of his commentary regarding "infinite free energy" machines, magnetic healing, a purported link between cancer and power lines or cell phones, cold fusion, and other junk science.

Dr. Park began his academic career preparing for law school before being drafted into the US Air Force, where he served as an electronics officer during and after the Korean War. Returning to civilian life, he studied physics at the University of Texas where he received his BS degree with high honors in 1958 and his MA degree two years later. He received his PhD in 1964 from Brown University where he studied surface physics under H. E. Farnsworth, one of the pioneers of the field. A year later he joined Sandia Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico and in 1969 became head of its Surface Physics Division. In 1974 he was appointed Professor of Physics and Director of the Center of Materials Research at the University of Maryland, and from 1978 to 1982 was chair of the Physics and Astronomy Department at UMD.

Author of more than a hundred technical papers on the structure and properties of single-crystal surfaces, Park divided his time between the University and the American Physical