

Harlow Shapley Encyclopedia Article

Harlow Shapley

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Harlow Shapley

1885-1972

American astronomer who improved astronomical education. Studying at Princeton under Henry Norris Russell, Shapley began his career at the Mount Wilson Observatory, where he researched globular star clusters. He stated that the Milky Way's diameter was 300,000 light years, which was later proven incorrect. As director of the Harvard Observatory, Shapley promoted astronomy to the public with frequent news releases. He established a graduate program in astronomy at Harvard. Shapley catalogued galaxies and his research aided other astronomers' discoveries.