Eric J. Chaisson

short biography

Dr. Eric J. Chaisson researches physics & astronomy at Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and teaches natural science at Harvard University.

His major interests are currently twofold: His scientific research addresses an interdisciplinary, thermodynamic study of physical, biological, and cultural phenomena, seeking to understand the origin and evolution of galaxies, stars, planets, life, and society, thus devising a unifying cosmic-evolutionary worldview of the Universe and our sense of place within it writ large. His educational work engages master teachers and computer animators to create better methods, technological aids, and novel curricula to enthuse teachers and instruct students in all aspects of natural science. He teaches an annual undergraduate course at Harvard on the subject of cosmic evolution, which combines both of these research and educational goals.

- **Member, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge MA**
- **Director's Office, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC**
- **Associate, Harvard College Observatory**
- **Faculty of Arts & Sciences, Division of Continuing Education, Harvard University**

Contact Information

email: ejchaisson@cfa.harvard.edu
chaisson@fas.harvard.edu
phone: 978.505.2667
internet: http://www.cfa.harvard.edu/~ejchaisson
paper: Harvard College Observatory, Bldg. A, MS-10
60 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138 USA

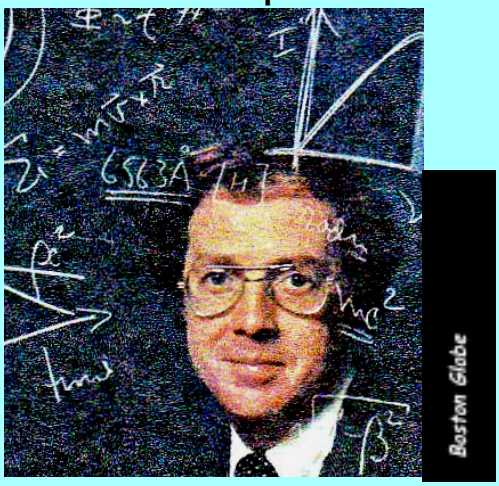
biographical sketch follows . . . .

Biographical Sketch (cf., also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Chaisson

Who's Who in America; Who's Who in Science and Engineering; Who's Who in American Education.)

Dr. Eric J. Chaisson is a member of Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, affiliates with Harvard College Observatory and Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, and teaches with the Faculty of Arts & Sciences at Harvard University.

Trained initially in atomic physics, Chaisson obtained his doctorate in astrophysics from Harvard University in 1972. During his early tenure as associate professor at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, his research focused largely on the radio astronomical study of interstellar gas clouds. This work won him fellowships from the National Academy of Sciences and the Sloan Foundation, as well as Harvard's BJ Bok Prize for original contributions to astrophysics and Harvard's Smith-Weld Prize for literary merit. He has also held research and teaching positions at MIT, Wellesley, and Johns Hopkins where he was a scientist on the senior staff and director of educational programs at the (Hubble) Space Telescope Science Institute, and at Tufts University where he was for two decades director of the Wright Center for Science Education and Research Professor of Physics, Astronomy, and Education. He has written nearly 200 publications, most of them in professional journals.



To share the essence of his research and teaching with a wide audience, Chaisson has written a dozen books, including *Cosmic Dawn* that won several literary awards such as the Phi Beta Kappa Prize, the American Institute of Physics Writing Award, and a National Book Award Nomination for distinguished science writing. His other books include two works on relativity, a textbook on cosmic evolution, and a volume (co-authored with George Field) outlining the scientific rationale for the United States' national space policy. Another book, The *Hubble Wars*, also won the American Institute of Physics Writing Award, and his popular textbook *Astronomy Today* (co-authored with Steve McMillan and now in its 9th edition) is the most widely used college astronomy textbook in the nation. His most recent books, *Cosmic Evolution: The Rise of Complexity in Nature,* and *Epic of Evolution: Seven Ages of the Cosmos,* were published by Harvard and Columbia University Presses, respectively.

Chaisson holds membership in numerous American and international scientific organizations, several honor societies, and a host of academic, public, and federal advisory committees. He was recently elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.