

# Wise Observatory at TAU Gains a Meaningful Gift

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**ISRAEL'S SECOND LARGEST TELESCOPE DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF JAY BAUM RICH  
BY HIS SON, MIKE RICH**



There is no better therapy than taking positive action. This is exactly why American benefactor and UCLA researcher **Dr. Michael Rich** wanted so deeply to dedicate to the memory of his late father a special gift, a novel and powerful astronomical telescope, to the country that inspired Jay to remain strong when he felt that the rest of the world wanted him to be weak.

The telescope was unveiled recently at **Tel Aviv University's Florence and George Wise Observatory** in Mitzpe Ramon at a ceremony that included Wise Observatory Director **Prof. Dan Maoz** of the **Raymond and Beverly Sackler School of Physics and Astronomy**, TAU Director-General **Mordehai Kohn**, and TAU Vice Rector **Prof. Dina Prialnik**. Along with Dr. Rich's donation, this latest addition to the observatory was made possible by generous gifts from Prof. Mike Shara of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, and Ezra Druker of Tel Aviv.

The Jay Baum Rich Telescope has a 28-inch primary mirror, making it the second largest telescope in Israel, and it can take images as deep as telescopes five times larger. Astronomers are able to submit instructions for a night's observing (executed automatically) without being present at the observatory, as is done for the Hubble Space Telescope. The telescope will be used to study distant supernovae, the search for planets beyond our solar system, and the study of galaxies. It is expected that many TAU PhD students will use the telescope as well.

### **Love for Israel**

Growing up in Saginaw, Michigan, Jay Baum Rich faced anti-Semitism at a young age. He felt that it was his duty to teach his children to remember their Jewish heritage, and to never forget where they came from.

Jay was a family man full of energy and determination. His love of art, music, and knowledge was contagious, and inspired his son's love of science and teaching at UCLA's Astronomy Department.

"My father and I visited Israel in 1972, before the Yom Kippur War," recounted Rich. "One vision I have burned in my memory was that it was easy to see the borders. Israel had planted trees everywhere, while the land outside the border was barren." It was then that he understood his father's love for Israel, Rich said.

### **Housing the telescope**

The Jay Baum Rich telescope is housed in a special dome at the observatory. "The TAU staff at the Wise Observatory contributed hundreds of person-hours to build the dome and get everything to perform at a professional level," stressed Rich. "Without their expertise, and also the tireless efforts of former Wise Director, Dr. Noah Brosch, this project simply would not have happened.

"This is a great achievement for Tel Aviv University and its astronomy department. It doubles the power of the Wise Observatory facilities," Rich said.

Rich looked forward to the possibility of Israel's inclusion in the European Southern Observatory, which would give the Israeli astronomical community access to some of the world's most powerful facilities, including the world's largest telescope planned for Chile.

"I have confidence that the young people whose careers begin here at the Wise Observatory will indeed reach their dreams," Rich concluded.

