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Susan M.P. McKenna-Lawlor



Susan McKenna-Lawlor (née McKenna) is a space physicist. She was born in Dublin and educated at University College Dublin; the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies and the University of Michigan. Her Doctoral Thesis was on Solar Flares and Solar-Terrestrial Relationships (Space Weather). She is currently Emeritus Professor at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth; Guest Professor of the Chinese Academy of Sciences; Member of the Senate of the National University of Ireland and Founder/Managing Director of the successful company Space Technology Ireland, Ltd.

She has either already participated in, or is currently participating in, scientific missions of the European (ESA); American (NASA); Russian (Intercosmos); Japanese (ISAS) and Chinese (CSSAR) space agencies.

As Principal Investigator (PI) she carried full scientific, technical and administrative responsibility for Ireland's EPONA experiment on ESA's (Giotto) Mission that encountered Halley's Comet in 1986; made the first historic flyby of Earth in 1990 and encountered Comet Grigg-Skjellerup in 1992. Also, she provided the national instrument LION for ESA's Solar Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) mission and now acts as PI/Co-I for experiments on the CLUSTER (4-spacecraft constellation); Mars-Express; Venus-Express, SMART (lunar), Double Star Polar (Earth Observation) and ROSETTA (Comet) missions.

Further, she contributed to NASA's SKYLAB; SOLAR MAXIMUM; WIND and Gravity Probe B (RELATIVITY) Missions and also provided experiments to INTERCOSMOS for the Phobos Mission to Mars and its Moons (2 spacecraft) and for the Mars-96 Mission.

She received an Irish Person of the Year Award in 1986; the Russian Tsiolkovsky Gold Medal for "Outstanding Contributions to Cosmonautics" in 1988 and was made an Honorary Citizen of San Jose, California for technological achievement in 1991. She was conferred with the Irish laureate Woman of Europe Award in 1994 and with the Book Award of the International Academy of Astronautics in 1998. She is the author of over 100 academic publications on scientific and technical subjects and on the history of Irish science.

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