

book reviews

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Out of the shadows. Contributions of twentieth-century women to physics. Edited by Nina Byers and Gary Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xxv + 471. Price (hardback) GBP 30.00. ISBN-13 978-0-521-82197-1.

The book is a portrait gallery containing 40 biographies; most of the women were physicists, both theoretical and experimental physicists, but mathematicians, astronomers, chemists and biochemists are also included. The criterion for selection was indeed excellency.

The book is quite unusual because the articles do not begin with the biography but with the subject's most important contributions to science and then the biography follows. All the articles are written by experts and are presented with full scientific details and not as popular science. Boxes and illustrations are used to help with understanding. The biographies include a list of the honors, awards or prizes won by each subject. The portrayed women are mostly from the USA, but also from Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, France, Italy, Denmark, Germany, Austria and China; the authors of the

articles are also international. At the end of each article, a list is given of the most important publications as well as further reading. The foreword is by Freeman J. Dyson, who also wrote the article on Mary Lucy Cartwright; the introduction is by Nina Byers, who wrote the article on Emmy Noether. The highlights of the book are the Nobel laureates Marie Curie, Irène Joliot-Curie, Maria Goeppert Mayer, Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin and Rosalyn Sussman Yalow.

At the end of the book, the reader will find a name index and a subject index. The book is of highest quality and can be recommended without hesitation.

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