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Opportunities and Challenges for Women in Physics in National Laboratories

BEVERLY KARPLUS HARTLINE, University of the District of Columbia

America's national laboratories have long been major players advancing science and technology, especially in physics and engineering. Both true government laboratories, like the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Naval Research Laboratory, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and contractor-operated laboratories, like most of the Department of Energy (DOE) laboratories, employ large numbers of physicists—mostly men, but increasing numbers of women. Among them are former astronaut Sally Ride, APS' 2009 President Cherry Murray, Nobel laureate Maria Goeppert Mayer, Leona Woods Marshall Libby, Elaine Oran, and Deborah Jin. Research at national laboratories also involve numerous high-school, undergraduate, and graduate students, along with post-doctoral fellows, thereby helping to launch many into physics careers. This presentation will discuss the opportunities, challenges, and climate for women in physics at national laboratories, from the perspective of a person with about 20 years experience as a researcher and manager at both NASA and DOE laboratories.