

Abstract Submitted
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Sarah Frances Whiting: Foremother of American Women Physicists FRIEDA STAHL — Sarah Frances Whiting taught physics and astronomy at Wellesley College for 40 years. After receiving her A.B. degree in 1864, she taught math and classics at a girls' secondary school, and independently studied the science that had attracted her interest. Named to the faculty of Wellesley before its opening in 1876, she attended MIT as an unenrolled guest and observed Edward Pickering's work in establishing the first instructional labs in the U.S. She established the second, which were the first for women students, on returning to Wellesley in 1878. In 1879 she began teaching astronomy also, and built both departments and programs. Rather than celestial observation, she emphasized photometry and spectroscopy. She was instrumental in procuring support for a college observatory, completed and dedicated in 1900, which she directed until her retirement in 1916. Tufts awarded her an honorary Sc.D. in 1905.

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