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Personal reflections on Vera Rubin and her science

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Vera Rubin, with Kent Ford's innovative image-tube spectrograph, showed that stars do not rotate around the centers of galaxies the way they were expected to. Their pioneering observations demonstrated the existence of an unseen component of matter in galaxies and this initiated a worldwide effort to understand a universe with dark matter. Our view of the universe today is drastically different as a result. Vera was also a trailblazer and tireless advocate of women in astronomy. She was the first woman to observe at Palomar Observatory under her own name, and twenty years later, when she was observing on Las Campanas, she saw a night when all of the observers on the mountain were women. I will talk about Vera as a scientist and as a person, her remarkable career and the characteristics that made her a quiet revolutionary.