



Rays, Waves and Photons: The History of Pure and Applied Optics

By William L. Wolfe

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Rays Waves and Photons is a history of the development of our knowledge of light and its many applications. For example, the development of telescopes is outlined from their first invention by Hans Lippershey, its improvement and use by Galileo all the way to the proposed James Webb telescope in space and the Giant Magellan one in the Andes. The history of infrared applications is covered from its discovery by William Herschel through its development in Germany until its use in, among other things, finding the Boston bomber. Some forty different subjects are described historically including optical design, microscopes, cameras, spectacles, military, medical and fiber optics and lasers. Each has its own chapter and its own history.

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Rays, Waves and Photons: The History of Pure and Applied Optics By William L. Wolfe Bibliography

- Rank: #7631509 in Books
- Brand: Ingramcontent
- Published on: 2015-10-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .75" w x 5.51" l, 1.02 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 288 pages

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Editorial Review

About the Author

William L. (Bill) Wolfe was born at a very early age in Yonkers, NY. He graduated with honors from Bucknell University and did graduate work at The University of Michigan. He has taught at Michigan, Northeastern and The University of Arizona from which he is now Professor Emeritus (as he pronounces it, Meritless). In between he had a real job at the Honeywell Radiation Center in Massachusetts, where he managed the Electro-optical Systems Department. He has written four technical books and one non-technical one about different aspects of optics, and has edited five optics handbooks. He received the gold medal, its highest award, from SPIE, the International Society for Optics and Photonics and Outstanding Achievement in a Chosen Profession from his alma mater. He was president of SPIE and served on many government committees and consulted for many companies. He has been supported for 60 years by his lovely wife, Mary Lou, and is proud of his three children and six grandchildren. When he is not chasing the elusive photon, he searches for the wily trout with his fly rod or cultivates weeds in his garden. He has even been found serenading in senior living homes, mostly with anthems and songs from Broadway musicals.

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