

## HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT

Instruction in physics at VU, present to some degree since the early days of the institution, has been carried out by Ph.D. physicists since the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

We have benefited from impressive continuity in leadership under three talented department chairs, Dr. Ancil Thomas (1929-1956), Dr. Armin Manning (1956-1977), and Dr. Donald Koetke (1977-2005) whose energy and talents were devoted to teaching and mentoring several generations of VU students and faculty.

Once combined in a joint department with Mathematics, the VU Physics Department was established in the late 1950s. To reflect a growing presence of instruction and research in astronomy, it was renamed the Department of Physics and Astronomy in the early 1990s.

In the 1980's, when VU was first featured as a top school in the annual US News and World Report, the physics department was highlighted as an exemplar of the high quality of education at VU.

The department currently consists of seven full-time faculty members who are each engaged in teaching and research with VU students. On average, about ten students are employed each summer as research assistants and work with the faculty on projects that are funded by external grant agencies like the Department of Energy, NASA, and the National Science Foundation.

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