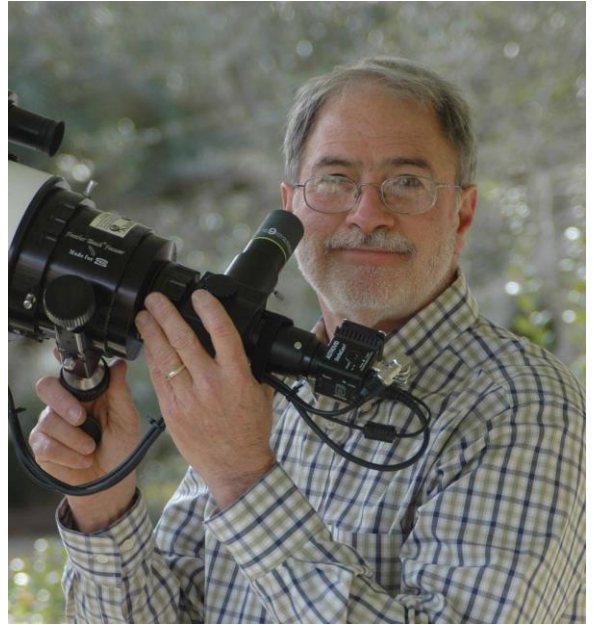


Terry "TR" Richardson followed an unusual career path to astrophysics professor. He received a BS in physics from the Un. of South Carolina (1968) and began graduate studies in nuclear physics before moving to Vanderbilt where he earned an MS in astrophysics (1971). The 1970s were a bleak time for astrophysics jobs. PhD production had increased ten times in the previous decade, but not the job opportunities. Some programs even declined accepting applications.

So, Richardson grabbed his backpack and set out on the Appalachian Trail. A Charleston prep school headmaster, temporarily in need of a chemistry teacher, recruited him off the trail. After that appointment he returned to Nashville, received an NSF grant, taught high school physics, earned teacher certification at Peabody College and continued his research in contact binary stars.



In 1975 Peabody hired him as their second physics professor and he coached track at Peabody Dem School. He served until Peabody abolished his position due to financial difficulties, and he returned to the Charleston prep school where he taught physics, astronomy and advanced mathematics for four years.

Then he resigned, gave up his apartment, sold all his possessions except for his clothes, camera and station wagon and traveled the country camping and working as a nature photographer. In that time he sold work to the likes of Sierra Club and Audubon. It was in 1981 that the College of Charleston recruited him to return to Charleston for an adjunct position in physics and astronomy. He was promoted over the years until in 2005 he was appointed the Mebane Professor of Physics and Astronomy. At the graduation ceremonies in 2006 he was awarded the College of Charleston Distinguished Teaching Award. He retired in 2018 and moved to Asheville in 2022.