

# The sky is not the limit <sup>[1]</sup>

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on 1 August 2010 - 12:00am



<sup>[2]</sup>

Dr. Daniel Altschuler at the Arecibo Observatory

Throughout human history, all generations looked to the sky and asked: What exists beyond our World? That same curiosity awoke in the Uruguayan scientist and member of [CienciaPR](#), <sup>[3]</sup> **Dr. Daniel Altschuler** <sup>[4]</sup> the interest in investigate the galaxies.

Daniel Altschuler, who is a professor of the [Department](#) <sup>[5]</sup> of [Physics](#) <sup>[5]</sup> of [The](#) <sup>[6]</sup> [University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras](#) <sup>[6]</sup>, directed the [Arecibo Observatory](#) <sup>[7]</sup> for twelve years. One of its greater contributions was the creation of the [Angel Ramos Foundation Visitor Center](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, a place with educational and interactive exhibitions about atmospheric and astronomical sciences, inaugurated in 1997. This center has been visited by millions of people and has achieved that they have access to the science that develops in the largest radiotelescope of the world. Since its creation, the center has been headquarters of important symposiums, seminars, educational workshops, and is one of the main attractions in the island, which has been motive of a lot of pride for all the puertorricans.

**The dissemination of the science** has been the motivation for Dr. Altschule who is author of various books, being the most recent *Extraterrestres, Humanos, Dioses y Estrellas* <sup>[9]</sup> î. His numerous publications in scientific journals, the press and his books have contributed to his mission in promoting **public understanding of science**. Recently, Dr. Altschuler was recognized by the [American Institute of](#) <sup>[10]</sup> [Physics](#) <sup>[10]</sup> with the [Andrew W. Gemant Award](#), which recognizes people that <sup>[11]</sup> have carried out an important cultural, artistic or humanistic contribution for the

physics. The educational efforts of Dr. Altschuler certainly contributed to a large extent to the campaign of public support when the Observatory of Arecibo was seen threatened of closure due to the lack of funds of the National Foundation of Sciences (NSF). Recently, the NSF amended its plans and decided to support to the Observatory to the 2016 [12].

Dr. Altschuler thinks that there are many important reasons to divulge the scientific information to the general public. First, the science is fascinating. Then, why not to expand our scientific knowledge? In addition, if the science is not disseminated, it decreases significantly the possibilities of having new generations interested on science, which would cause a shortage of future scientists. Finally, many investigations are sponsored with public funds, which offer the right to the people to know the fruit of that investment. If the public does not feel part of the science, their enthusiasms to support it will be minimal. In a democratic system like ours, this fact has a special relevance a public that ignore the scientific information will support wrong initiative with detrimental consequences in our society.

To achieve his purpose, Dr. Altschuler has been dedicated to orient the people, among others things, on the difference between science and pseudoscience [13], and has offered chats in Puerto Rico and all over the world. His greater challenge is to explain the scientific content in a manner that the general public can understand. We should understand that the public is not conceptually prepared for the majority of the terms that explain our science, for which part of our communication will consist of introducing and to explain concepts that help to understand what we want to communicate.

The challenges that Dr. Altschuler has found in his mission have not limited the desire of this physicist in continuing achieving that more people can have access to the science. If time ago someone said: "The sky is the limit", today we know that is not and it was not a limit for this scientist. For this reason he would like to see in the future a great museum for the science in Puerto Rico, where all the areas will be able join. If you want to know more on Dr. Daniel Altschuler [14], visit his profile in CienciaPR.org [15].

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