

# AUGER INFOCUS

#16 March/April, 2026

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## THE NAMES BEHIND THE AUGER CAMPUS

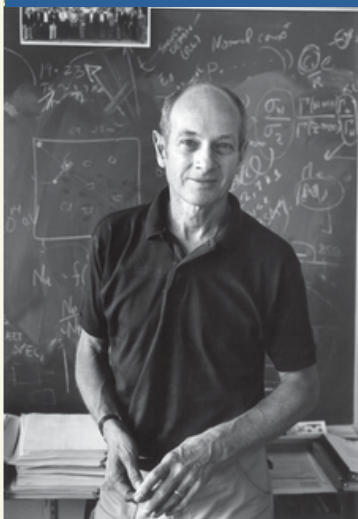
The Pierre Auger Observatory honors, through spaces that bear their names, outstanding members of the International Collaboration who transformed an idea into a reality.

The office building is named after the first director, James Cronin; the access path to the Observatory is named after Alberto Filevich; the Central Data Acquisition System commemorates Murat Boratav; and the Assembly Building is named after Gianni Navarra.

## JAMES CRONIN

James Watson Cronin was much more than the first director of the Pierre Auger Observatory; he was its intellectual guide. This researcher, who received the Nobel Prize in 1980, left the controlled environment of particle accelerators for the frontiers of the cosmos, co-founding the project alongside Alan Watson to solve the enigma of ultra-high-energy cosmic rays.

His original vision promoted, together with other collaborators, the revolutionary hybrid detection method: combining a 3,000 km<sup>2</sup> surface detector array with fluorescence telescopes to capture the ultraviolet light from atmospheric showers. His leadership was characterized by a deep respect for Malargüe; Cronin saw the observatory as a catalyst for local development, uniting international research with regional education. His practical approach was key to overcoming the challenges of the ambitious construction phase. Today, his legacy lives on through the site's innovative science and the collaboration between the global scientific community and the community of Malargüe, materialized in the school that bears his name.



## ALBERTO FILEVICH



Alberto Filevich was the indispensable link that transformed the Pierre Auger Observatory from an international dream into an Argentine reality. As a prominent physicist at CNEA, he was among the first local scientists to recognize the potential of hosting the world's largest cosmic ray detector in Mendoza.

He did more than offer technical support; he became a key architect in the Observatory's early development and worked to ensure the project had a solid foundation. His advocacy and logistical leadership were crucial in the selection of Malargüe as the southern site. Alberto was recognized for his humanistic approach to science, fostering a culture in which local engineers and Nobel laureates collaborated as equals. He dedicated himself to guiding a new generation of Argentine researchers, ensuring they played a leading role in the observatory's technical achievements.



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## MURAT BORATAV



Murat Boratav was the essential "third pillar" of the Pierre Auger Observatory, the diplomatic nexus who helped transform a bold scientific vision into a global reality. He was a key architect of the project's international spirit, bridging the gap between French high-energy physics and the collaboration's ambitious goals.

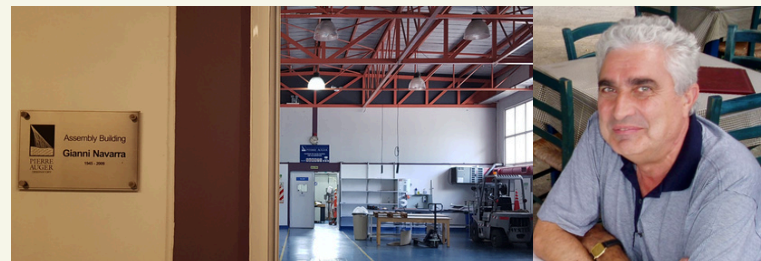
As a professor at the Pierre and Marie Curie University, he was a strong advocate who understood that the world's largest cosmic ray detector required a foundation of human connection and European support. His legacy is defined by a singular poise in addressing complex issues and a deep commitment to scientific outreach. He dedicated his career to writing for the public and visiting schools to share the mystery of "ghost particles." Within the collaboration, he helped keep the team focused during arduous logistical challenges, fostering an environment of warmth and camaraderie that his colleagues still remember today.



## GIANNI NAVARRA

Gianni Navarra was the stabilizing force of the Pierre Auger Observatory, a man whose serenity during heated debates became as legendary as his scientific contributions. Before bringing his expertise to the Andes, he directed the prestigious EAS-TOP experiment at Gran Sasso, Italy, establishing himself as a leading expert of cosmic ray detection.

When his Turin group joined Auger in 2000, he brought an experienced perspective that bridged traditional air shower physics with the Observatory's innovative hybrid approach. Gianni's legacy is defined by his role as a counselor and mentor. He possessed the ability to navigate the complexities of international collaboration, offering technical insights into detector calibration and hadronic interactions with both modesty and immense influence. He believed the observatory's strength lay in its people and dedicated himself to training a generation of physicists who inherited his blend of imaginative thinking and rigorous methodology. Though he passed away in 2010, the "Auger spirit" he helped cultivate endures.



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