Karen S. Bjorkman, Ph.D.
Distinguished University Professor
Helen Luedtke Brooks Professor of Astronomy
Dean of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Karen Bjorkman is an astronomer and astrophysicist who became fascinated with science, and particularly astronomy, as a child watching the Apollo moon landings in real time on grainy black and white TV images. She obtained her B.S. in Physics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, worked for several years at an aerospace company as a systems engineer, and then returned to graduate school for her M.S. and Ph.D. in Astrophysics at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

After graduate school, she was a staff scientist at the Space Astronomy Laboratory of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she was co-Investigator for the Wisconsin Ultraviolet Photo-Polarimeter Experiment (WUPPE for short), a telescope that was flown twice on the NASA Space Shuttle. During the shuttle missions, she worked on the operations team at the NASA Payload Operations Control Center. In 1996, she came to the University of Toledo (UT) as an Assistant Professor, rising through the ranks to become a Full Professor in 2003. For several years she was the director of the Ritter Observatory. In 2009 she was selected as a Distinguished University Professor. She was chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy from 2008-2010, and in December 2010 she was named Dean of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at UT. In 2015, she was named as the inaugural holder of the Helen Luedtke Brooks Endowed Professorship in Astronomy.

Dr. Bjorkman's research focuses on disks around stars and (for some of these disks) their possible connections with planetary systems around other stars. She uses observational data from both space-based and ground-based telescopes around the world to study these objects. She has been awarded significant amounts of grant funding and observing time at major observatories to support her research. She has been an invited speaker at national and international astronomy meetings.

Dr. Bjorkman has provided significant service to the international astronomical community, and has been heavily involved in education and public outreach. She regularly gives public talks on astronomy, space, and science, and she was the original founder of the long-running *Universe in the Parks* program at the University of Wisconsin. She is a co-founder of the Northwestern Ohio chapter of the Association for Women in Science (AWIS) at UT. Her awards include a Cottrell Scholar Award, the Sigma Xi/Dion D. Raftopolous Award for Outstanding Research, a UT Outstanding Teaching Award, three NASA Group Achievement Awards, and an Ohio Excellence in Education award.

List of professional publications