

geology into—literally—other worlds. The book chronicles the efforts of a dedicated scientist to create a new science in the complex world of modern space-age politics and economics. In the process, it portrays a brilliant and unusual maverick, a man, rooted in the intellectual traditions and lifestyle of the American West, who dreamed of going to the Moon and did whatever it took to get himself, or some other geologist, there.

The book starts and ends with the March 1993 discovery of Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9, the comet that would break up and in July 1994 send its huge fragments hurtling into Jupiter's atmosphere. In between these chapters, Gene's character unfolds from birth to death—his education, early field work, his dreams and ambitions, his marriage, the struggle with Addison's disease that nearly killed him and ruined his dream of going to the Moon, his involvement with many increasingly complex spacecraft missions, the initiation of a major astronomical observing program, and return—in the Australian Outback—to the field work that he loved. The book is essentially a dual biography; Carolyn's story is warmly told, and the unfolding relationship between Gene and Carolyn is as beautiful as Gene's quest itself.

Gene's career was continuous, with each past segment seeming to form a building block for the next: Mapping for uranium deposits turned into a definitive work on impact mechanics at Meteor Crater, work that provided techniques for mapping and dating the lunar deposits. This led to further mapping of other planets and to studies of and intense searches for the bodies that produced those impacts. It was this last that led to a field program in Australia. If there is any weakness in the book, it is that the full context of Gene's brilliant mapping and stratigraphic knowledge is not revealed, because of the emphasis on the relationship among Gene, Carolyn, and David. The definitive biography that will place Gene's entire body of work in the context of the 20th century will probably need some perspective of passing time.

Levy's writing style is anecdotal, a style that works well in telling of the politics of the space program and of the many difficulties of the Ranger, Surveyor, and Apollo missions. He avoids the tedium of chronology by highlighting each chapter with quotations from Shakespeare, a device that conveys well that quality of otherworldly inspiration that seemed so

much a part of the Shoemaker dreams. These quotes also tease and challenge the reader to guess the content of the chapter and then, in retrospect, to summarize it.

Levy correctly declares that this is not a journalistic biography. His stated goal was to tell what Gene "was like"—not every detail of what he did—and he accomplishes this goal extremely well. Gene's brilliance, energy, wit, and especially his love of his wife and his science show through in every chapter.

In hindsight, it is perhaps unfortunate that the book was not named "Shoemakers by Levy," because it is indeed the story of the work and love of two remarkable people. Readers cannot help but be inspired and warmed by the lives portrayed.

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