

# The Daily

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# Journal

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## Reber joins local legends

Journal Staff

WHEATON — With gentle humor and a modicum of modesty, Grote Reber took his place beside Billy Graham, Red Grange and other DuPage County legends Saturday.

Reber, the pioneer radio astronomer who built a parabolic dish antenna beside his Wheaton home in 1938, became the eighth man inducted into the DuPage Heritage Gallery. As he rose to accept the honor, he received a standing ovation from the 400 in attendance at the county administration complex on County Farm Road.

Reber extended his thanks for the accolades — “most of which,” he quipped, “are true.”

Then the astronomer shared some anecdotes from his youthful experiments in Wheaton and his current work in Australia, where he now makes his home. He also answered questions from the audience.

**INCLUDED IN his responses** were some criticisms of the “big bang” theory of the universe’s origin. Reber said he is beginning

some work with Canadian scientists to disprove the theory that the universe began with a giant explosion and is continually expanding.

Such feistiness in bucking established ideas was lauded by his introducer, Leon Lederman, director of the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory.

“Grote Reber is an authentic original,” Lederman said. “He is uncowed by NASA’s billions, skeptical of the established theories.”

Lederman traced the history of astronomy. He noted that observation of the stars was limited to what could be seen until Reber used his antenna dish to record electronic impulses above and below the visible spectrum.

**“BECAUSE OF his enthusiasm,** we now have a greater range to study the universe,” Lederman said.

D. Ray Wilson, chairman of the board of the DuPage Heritage Gallery, publisher and editor of the Daily Journal and master of ceremonies for the evening, dubbed Reber the first radio astronomer in the world. “That is very special indeed,” Wilson said.