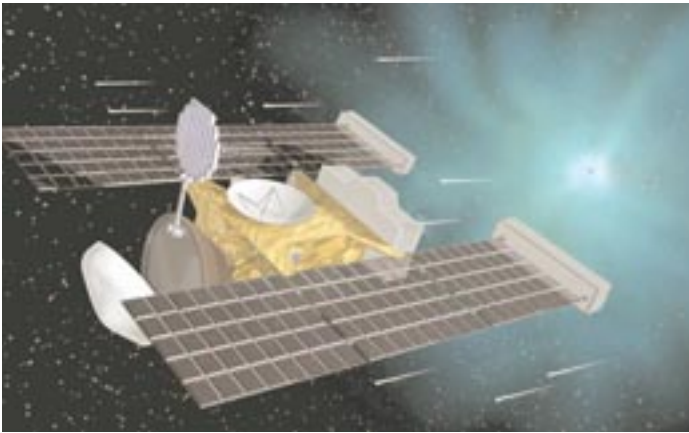


# Catch a Comet: The Stardust Mission

## Reaching for dust particles older than the sun



*Washington University's McDonnell Center for the Space Sciences is pleased to host the McDonnell Distinguished Lecturer*

### **Donald Brownlee**

Professor of Astronomy, University of Washington, and Principal Investigator, NASA's Stardust Mission

### **"The Stardust Mission"**

**Friday, April 16, 2004, 7:30 p.m.**

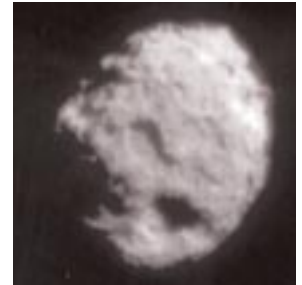
Arts & Sciences Laboratory Science Building,  
Jerzewiak Family Auditorium,  
Washington University

*Free lecture open to the public*

**S**tardust particles are the fundamental building blocks that form planetary systems and even ourselves. Although they can be seen by the naked eye as the dark band in the center of the Milky Way, such particles are far away and hard to study. The goal of NASA's Stardust mission is to collect matter from other stars that has been preserved in a comet for billions of years and bring it home for study at the highest possible resolution and sensitivity.

Comets not only contain records of the distant past, but also play an important role in astrobiology. They bring water and organic materials to planets that form close enough to their star to be warm, but too close to have naturally abundant water and carbon.

On January 2, 2004, Stardust's flyby of the comet Wild 2 resulted in the collection of thousands of samples that will return to Earth on January 15, 2006. It also resulted in extraordinary pictures of the surface of a comet that formed near Pluto more than 4.5 billion years ago.



*The comet Wild 2*

**McDonnell Center  
for the SPACE SCIENCES**

*... encouraging space-related research among scientists at Washington University's Departments of Physics and Earth & Planetary Sciences.*

*The Arts & Sciences Laboratory Science Building is located on the north side of Washington University's Hilltop Campus. From Big Bend Blvd., turn east on Snow Way (between Forsyth Blvd. and Forest Park Parkway), then proceed to the Millbrook Parking Garage. The parking garage's central set of stairs exits at Level 2, directly across from the entrance to the Laboratory Science Building.*

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Artist renderings and photo: JPL, NASA