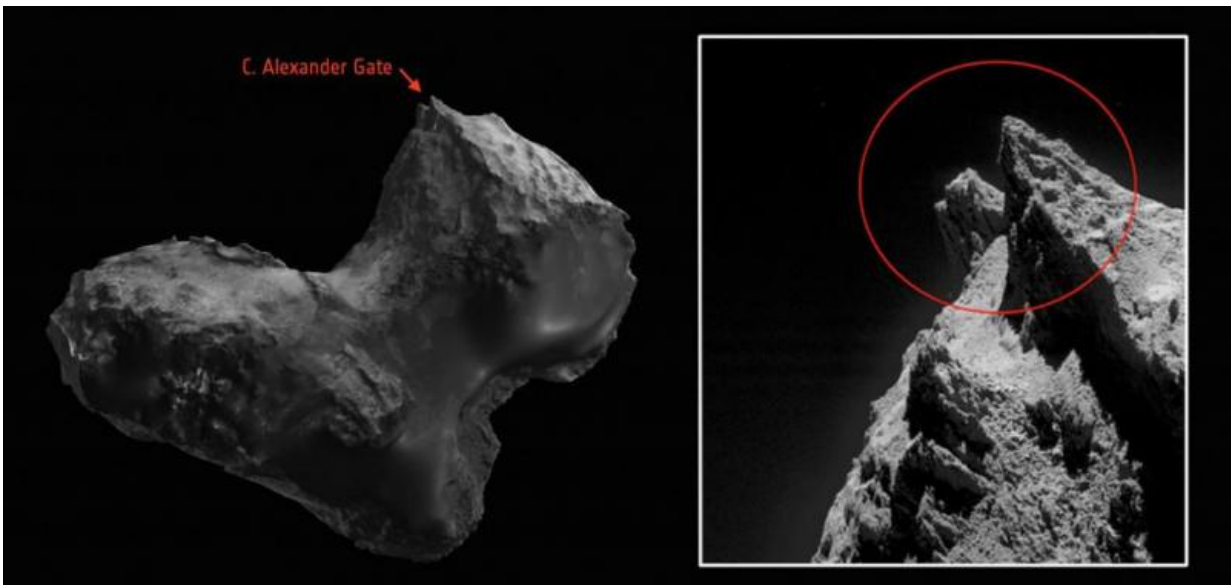


Comet feature named after late NASA scientist Claudia Alexander

September 30 2015



Scientists from the European Space Agency's Rosetta team have honored two late team members by naming comet features after them. The comet is 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko, where the mission successfully landed a probe. One of the features is shown here in these Rosetta images, with the picture on the right being a close-up view. The "C. Alexander Gate" is found on the comet's smaller lobe, and is dedicated to Claudia Alexander, the U.S. project scientist from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, California, who passed away in July of this year. Credit: ESA/Rosetta/MPS for OSIRIS Team MPS/UPD/LAM/IAA/SSO/INTA/UPM/DASP/IDA

Scientists from the European Space Agency's Rosetta mission are honoring their deceased colleague, Claudia Alexander of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, by naming a feature after her on the mission's target, comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko.

Alexander, who died in July 2015 at age 56, was the project scientist for the U.S. portion of the [mission](#). Her colleagues have named a gate-like feature on the comet C. Alexander Gate. Another deceased colleague, Angioletta Coradini, formerly of the National Astrophysics Institute of Italy, is being honored as well, with a feature on the other lobe of the [comet](#) called A. Coradini Gate.

Alexander earned a bachelor's degree in geophysics from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in geophysics and space physics from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1985. She earned a doctorate degree in atmospheric, oceanic and space sciences from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 1993. Alexander began working at JPL before finishing her doctorate, nearly three decades ago, later becoming the project manager for NASA's Galileo mission in 2000 at the relatively young age of 40.

One of Alexander's passions was inspiring young people. In her spare time, she wrote two children's books on science and mentored young African-American girls. She also wrote "steampunk" science fiction short stories.

More information: A European Space Agency blog post about the dedication is online at: blogs.esa.int/rosetta/2015/09/...deceased-colleagues/

Tributes to Alexander and a Q&A with her are online at: solarsystem.nasa.gov/people/alexanderc

Provided by Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Citation: Comet feature named after late NASA scientist Claudia Alexander (2015, September 30) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-09-comet-feature-late-nasa-scientist.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.