



Marie Curie (1867-1934), Physicist

Marie Curie was born November 7, 1867 in Warsaw, Poland. She was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize for her world famous work in the field of Radioactivity.

Marie Curie studied mathematics, chemistry and physics at the University of Paris. She met Pierre Curie, who taught physics at University of Paris. Marie and Pierre soon married, and teamed up to conduct research on radioactive substances. They found that the uranium ore contained a lot of radioactivity.

The Curie's began a search for the source of the radioactivity and discovered two highly radioactive elements, "radium" and "polonium." The Curie's won the 1903 Nobel Prize for physics for their discovery. They shared the award with another French physicist, Antoine Henri Becquerel, who had discovered natural radioactivity. After some years, Pierre, overworked and was weakened by his prolonged exposure to radioactive waves, died when he was run over by a horse drawn wagon.

Madame Curie continued her work on radioactive elements and won the 1911 Nobel Prize for isolating radium and studying its chemical properties. When the First World War broke out, Madame Curie thought X-rays would help to locate bullets and facilitate surgery. It was also important not to move the wounded, so she invented X-ray vans and trained 150 female attendants.

On July 4, 1934, at the age of 67 Madame Curie died of leukemia, thought to have been brought on by exposure to the high levels of radiation involved in her research. After her death the Radium Institute which she helped to found was renamed as Curie institute in her honor.