

Seeing More Clearly

Twinkling stars are fun for songs but frustrating for astronomers. Current technology uses *adaptive optics* to adjust for turbulence in the atmosphere and deliver an accurate image of stars, planets, and satellites. Correcting for atmospheric distortion involves linear algebra, geometry, and statistics to determine the extent of the distortion and continually adjust deformable mirrors which refocus light waves back along their true paths.

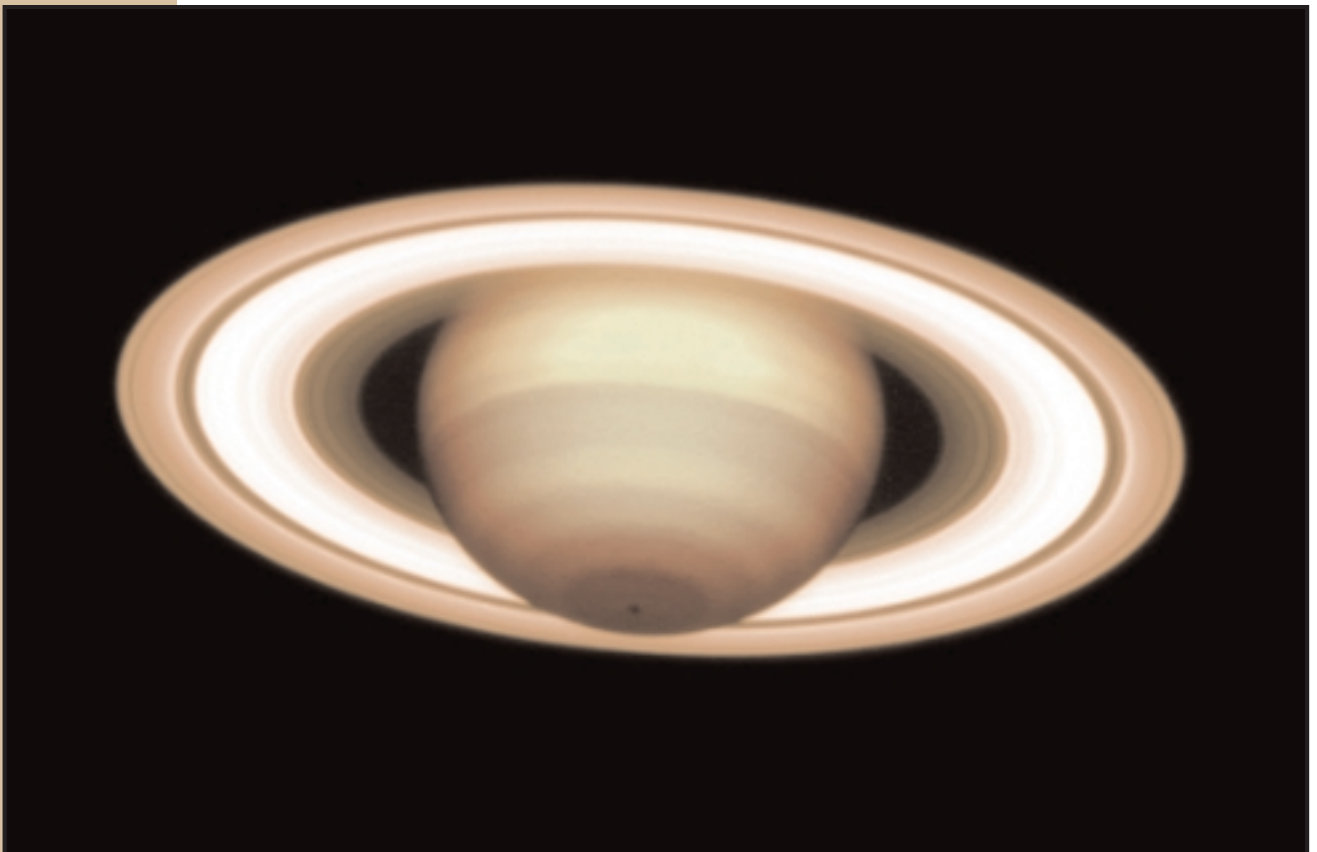


Image courtesy of the European Southern Observatory.



The **Mathematical Moments** program promotes appreciation and understanding of the role mathematics plays in science, nature, technology, and human culture.

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