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Luigi G. Jacchia: from the starry skies of Loiano to the American Moon race of the 60's

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We will briefly review the amazing story of Luigi G. Jacchia (Trieste, 1910 - Cambridge MA, 1996), an Italian astronomer who started his career at the Bologna Observatory in 1928 and found then his new life in the US, since 1939 by escaping, as a Jewish, the WWII's tragedy in Europe. With Fred Whipple, along his Harvard/SAO years, Jacchia joined the pioneering group of scientists that led to the NASA venture in the 50's. Jacchia's seminal contribution to high-atmosphere modelling was crucial for a safe re-entry of Mercury's, Gemini's and Apollo's manned missions, and greatly helped paving the way to the successful American space race in the 60's, that led man to the Moon.

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