

## GLOSSARY

### C

**coherence** the property by which two waves with identical wavelengths maintain a constant phase relationship (599)

### D

**diffraction** the spreading of waves into a region behind an obstruction (604)

### L

**laser** a device that produces an intense, nearly parallel beam of coherent light (613)

### O

**order number** the number assigned to interference fringes with respect to the central bright fringe (601)

### P

**path difference** the difference in the distance traveled by two interfering light waves (601)

### R

**resolving power** the ability of an optical instrument to separate two images that are close together (611)