

Balzan Prize Goes to Observatory Director FREE



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cited for his “significant contributions to the preparation, execution and analysis of measurements of inclusive high-energy electron scattering from nuclei.” The citation also noted that “scaling phenomena observed in these cross sections provide insight into the role of nucleonic and subnucleonic degrees-of-freedom in the short-range structure of nuclei.”

The Andreas Acrivos Dissertation Award in Fluid Dynamics was presented for the first time this year. The recipient, **Vittorio Cristini**, a post-doctoral associate in the chemical engineering and materials science department at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, was recognized for “important theoretical and numerical contributions to the description and understanding of drop dynamics and breakup laminar and turbulent flows.”

APS’s division of particles and fields made a special presentation in Paris this past summer to honor **Jean Trân Thanh Vân** of the Laboratory of Theoretical and High-Energy Physics, University of Paris XI, in Orsay, France. A certificate of appreciation was given to Vân for his “creative and sustained service to particle physics, international understanding, and the humane aspects of science.”

AAS Divisions Bestow Honors for 2000

Four divisions of the American Astronomical Society have announced prizes honoring achievements in astronomy and astrophysics.

The list of awardees includes **Conway Leovy**, an emeritus professor of atmospheric sciences and geophysics at the University of Washington in Seattle. Leovy received the Gerard P. Kuiper Prize from the division for planetary sciences for his “outstanding achievements in defining and advancing comparative studies of the structure and circulation of planetary atmospheres, their radiative and dynamic processes, and their interactions with the solid surface.”

The division for planetary sciences also honored **Alessandro Morbidelli** with the Harold C. Urey Prize. Morbidelli, an astronomer at the Observatoire de la Côte d’Azur in Nice, France, was recognized for his “outstanding accomplishments in studies of solar system dynamics,” including his work on modeling the delivery of meteorites to Earth and on the formation and evolution of Kirkwood gaps in the asteroid

belt, and his studies of asteroid families and the Kuiper belt of comets.

The division for planetary sciences posthumously awarded the Harold Masursky Meritorious Service Award to **George E. Brown Jr** (see PHYSICS TODAY, September 1999, page 48). The late Congressman Brown was cited for his accomplishments as “a champion for planetary science and exploration” and his “influential support of federal funding for basic science research.”

Larry Lebofsky, a senior research scientist in the lunar and planetary laboratory at the University of Arizona in Tucson, received the Carl Sagan Medal from the division for planetary sciences for his “long history of dedication to education and public outreach about a wide range of planetary science topics.”

The Bruno Rossi Prize, given by the high-energy astrophysics division, was shared this year by **Peter Mészáros**, **Bohdan Paczynski**, and **Martin Rees**. The three were honored for their “development of theoretical models of gamma ray bursters and their afterglows.” Mészáros is head of the astronomy and astrophysics department at Pennsylvania State University, Paczynski is the Lyman Spitzer Jr Professor of Astrophysics at Princeton University, and Martin Rees is the Astronomer Royal for the Royal Observatories of England and a professor at the University of Cambridge Institute of Astronomy.

The division also presented the first David N. Schramm Award for High-Energy Astrophysics Science Journalism. The winners were **Kathy Sawyer**, a staff writer at *The Washington Post*, who was recognized for her article entitled “Flash!” about gamma ray bursts, and **Robert Zimmerman**, a freelance writer, who won for his article in *The Sciences* entitled “There She Blows,” also about gamma ray bursts.

The solar physics division presented the George Ellery Hale Prize to **Loren Acton**, a research professor of physics at Montana State University. Acton, a former astronaut who flew on Spacelab 2, was honored for his “outstanding contributions to solar astronomy,” which include his research, his development of solar instruments, and his work with people and institutions.

The solar physics division’s Popular Writing Awards, given in two categories, went to the following individuals. **Peter Weiss** received the journalist award for his article “The Sun Also Writhes” in *Science News*,

for which Weiss is the physics/technology reporter. The scientist award went to **Sten Odenwald** for his article “Solar Storms,” which appeared in *The Washington Post*. Odenwald is the education and public outreach manager for NASA’s IMAGE satellite program and works for Raytheon ITSS in Lanham, Maryland.

E. Myles Standish, a principal member of the technical staff at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, received the Dirk Brouwer Award from AAS’s division on dynamical astronomy. The citation noted that his “remarkable work has been of great service to the astronomical community, especially NASA’s program of solar system exploration” and that his “ephemerides embody the finest craftsmanship of our discipline, and in a very real sense are the crown jewel of celestial mechanics.”

Balzan Prize Goes to Observatory Director

The Swiss-Italian International E. Balzan Prize Foundation in September presented the Balzan Prizes 2000, one of which was awarded to astrophysicist **Michel Mayor** and is worth CHF 500,000 (approximately \$285 000).

Mayor, director of the Geneva Observatory in Switzerland, received the Balzan Prize in the field of instrumentation and techniques in astronomy and astrophysics within the category of physics, mathematics, science, and medicine for his discovery of the “first extraterrestrial satellite orbiting around the star 51 Pegasi,” reports the foundation. This discovery “was achieved thanks to the improvements made in spectrography instrumentation capable of measuring the velocity of a star and the perturbations in its motion, this being indirect proof of the presence of a planet. Using the same systems, since [the discovery] a further 20 or so planets have been detected, some of them by Mayor himself.”

Balzan Prizes are awarded each year in different fields within the humanities, social sciences, and art category and the physics, mathematics, science, and medicine category. A special prize for humanitarian achievement is handed out every three to five years. The fields in which the 2001 Balzan Prizes will be awarded are climatology, cognitive neurosciences, literary history and criticism (post-1500), and the history of architecture.

The foundation, which has an

office in Zurich, Switzerland, and one in Milan, Italy, awards the prizes to achieve the goal of “fostering, on a worldwide level, culture and science, outstanding humanitarian causes, and peace and brotherhood among peoples, regardless of nationality, race, or creed.”

IN BRIEF

Evgeny L. Feinberg and **J. D. Bjorken** are the winners of this year’s Pomeranchuk Prize, which is given by Moscow’s Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics. Feinberg, a professor, academician, and principal researcher with the P. N. Lebedev Physical Institute in Moscow, was cited for his “outstanding contributions to theoretical physics and especially to the theory of inelastic collisions of hadrons.” Bjorken, who retired in 1998 as a theoretical physicist with SLAC, was cited for his “outstanding contributions to particle physics and quantum field theory, in particular for formulating the scaling law in deep inelastic processes.” Each prizewinner will receive a certificate and an undisclosed monetary prize. Established in 1998, the Pomeranchuk Prize, named for scientist Isaak Yakovlevich Pomeranchuk, is awarded annually for achievements in all theoretical fields to which Pomeranchuk had contributed.

This past September, at its annual meeting in Bremen, Germany, the German astronomical society *Astronomische Gesellschaft* presented awards to **Roger Penrose** and **Heino Falcke**. Penrose, Emeritus Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University in England, was awarded the Karl Schwarzschild Prize, the society’s highest award, for his “great scientific work” that “spans a nearly unbelievable range, from fundamental mathematical research, to physics, astronomy, cosmology, and even to the working of the brain and the human perception of the world,” according to the citation. Falcke, a scientist with the Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy in Bonn, Germany, and a lecturer at the University of Bonn, received the Ludwig Biermann Prize in recognition of his work on black holes, specifically the relationship between accretion disks and jets, his modeling of the black hole in the galactic center, the prediction of a “shadow” of the event horizon observable with radio interferome-

ters, and the detection of many new black holes in nearby galaxies through radio interferometry.

David J. McComas joined the Southwest Research Institute in Texas this past September as the executive director of its instrumentation and space research division. Formerly the founding director of the Center for Space Science and Exploration at Los Alamos National Laboratory and program manager of NASA projects there, McComas will continue to serve as the principal investigator on several NASA instruments.

Stephen Rodgers became manager of the Propulsion Research Center at NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, in August. He previously served as chief of the propulsion sciences and advanced concepts division at the Air Force Research Laboratory on Edwards Air Force Base in California.

The Bjørn H. Wiik Prize was awarded for the first time this past May. It went to **Evgeny Saldin**, **Evgeny Schneidmiller**, and **Mikhail Yurkov**, physicists at the German Electron Synchrotron (DESY) TESLA test facility in Hamburg, Germany, for “their outstanding contributions to

the Free Electron Laser [FEL] project at DESY,” according to the citation. Margret Becker-Wiik presented the award, which was established in honor of the DESY director who died in 1999 and acknowledges “outstanding contributions to the advancement of research programs or technical development projects at DESY.” The prize will be handed out every two years.

At its annual meeting in May in Vancouver, British Columbia, the Canadian Astronomical Society presented the Carlyle S. Beals Award for 2000 to **Gilles Fontaine**, a professor of physics at the University of Montreal. The award is given to a Canadian astronomer or an astronomer working in Canada in recognition of either a specific achievement in research or a lifetime of innovative research, according to the citation. Fontaine’s primary field of research is the study of the late phases of stellar evolution, white dwarf stars, subdwarf stars, and asteroseismology. Invited to address the society at the meeting, Fontaine gave a talk entitled “The Potential of White Dwarf Cosmochronology.” In addition to the award, he received a cash prize of \$1000.

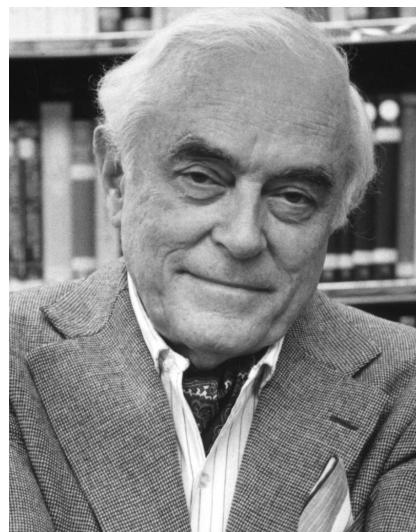
OBITUARIES

John Alexander Simpson

John Alexander Simpson, a nuclear and cosmic-ray physicist and Arthur H. Compton Distinguished Service Professor emeritus at the University of Chicago’s Enrico Fermi Institute and department of physics, died on 31 August from pneumonia following successful heart surgery at a Chicago hospital.

Simpson was born on 3 November 1916 in Portland, Oregon. He earned an AB degree in physics from Reed College in 1940 and both an MS (1942) and PhD (1943) in physics from New York University.

Simpson’s professional career began in 1943 as a group leader on the Manhattan Project. Recognizing the importance of acquainting the public and political leaders with the implications of nuclear energy, he became a founding member and first chairman of the Atomic Scientists of Chicago



JOHN ALEXANDER SIMPSON

and a cofounder of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* in 1945. Also that year, Simpson joined the faculty of the University of Chicago as an instructor in the department of