

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Spread the good news!

Yan Ma, new head of the group “Sustainable Synthesis of Materials” at the Max-Planck-Institut für Eisenforschung, was awarded the Walter Benjamin Grant from the German Research Foundation. This grant enables Ma to conduct his own research project on green steel production. The Walter Benjamin Programme enables postdoctoral researchers at an early-career phase who are associated with a German research institution or work there, to conduct independently a research project of their choice. The prize is named after Walter Benjamin, a German philosopher and cultural critic, who lived from 1892 to 1940.

Callie I. Higgins, a materials research engineer at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), has won the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal in the Emerging Leaders category. Higgins is one of seven medal winners of 29 finalists selected from more than 350 nominations for the “Oscars of public service.” Medalists are chosen based on their leadership and innovation, as well as the impact of their work on the health, safety, and prosperity of the country.

The Materials Research Institute has named five Roy Award winners. This award recognizes interdisciplinary materials research at The Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) that yields innovative and unexpected results. The award is named after Della and Rustum Roy, who are both alumni of Penn State’s College of Earth and Mineral Sciences and long-serving faculty in the college. This year’s winners were announced at the 2021 Materials Day event. Faculty awardees include **Andrea Argüelles**, assistant professor of engineering science and mechanics; **Cui-Zu Chang**, assistant professor of physics; and **Huan Yu “Larry” Cheng**,

Dorothy Quiggle Career Development Professor of Engineering Science and Mechanics. Graduate student winners include **Elena Vazquez**, doctoral candidate in the Stuckeman Center for Design Computation, and **Yihuang Xiong**, graduate research assistant in materials science and engineering.

Ram Devanathan was promoted to division director at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL). He manages a division of 200+ people advancing materials research in support of clean energy—batteries, fuel cells, carbon capture, storage and utilization, converting wastes and biomatter into aviation fuel, and energy efficient advanced manufacturing. Devanathan states that he is delighted to be leading this Decarbonization effort at PNNL.

Michael J. Manfra, the Bill and Dee O’Brien Distinguished Professor of Physics and Astronomy in the College of Science, and professor of materials engineering and of electrical and computer engineering in the College of Engineering at Purdue University, will receive the 2021 Arden L. Bement Jr. Award, the most prestigious award given by the university in pure and applied science and engineering. He is being honored for his field-defining work in quantum physics. Manfra and his research team reported in 2020 a landmark experiment that found evidence for fractional statistics of quasiparticles called anyons.

Yong Chen, the Karl Lark-Horovitz Professor of Physics and Astronomy in the College of Science, professor of electrical and computer engineering in the College of

Engineering at Purdue University, and director of the Purdue Quantum Science and Engineering Institute, will receive the 2021 Herbert Newby McCoy Award, the most prestigious award given by the university for outstanding work in the natural sciences. He is being recognized for his significant research achievements and innovations in the synthesis and studies of various novel quantum materials and matters. Chen leads a large interdisciplinary research group that works on quantum matter and devices involving such systems as graphene and 2D materials, topological insulators, and cold atoms and molecules, and explores their applications in electronics, sensors, energy, and quantum information.

Nanotechnology pioneer Distinguished Professor **Chennupati Jagadish** will become the next president of Australia’s premier science organization, the Australian Academy of Science. Jagadish’s expertise is in the field of nanotechnology. He arrived in Australia in 1990 as a research scientist at The Australian National University and now leads its Semiconductor Optoelectronics and Nanotechnology Group. Jagadish helps develop semi-conductors used in LED lights and has designed and developed some of the world’s smallest lasers. His research has also been applied to make lightweight flexible solar cells, to split water to create hydrogen as a pure energy source, and to manipulate neurons to treat people living with dementia. He has also pioneered the creation of high-performance next-generation optical devices, which have huge potential in the field of communications and data storage.

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