

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arthur Eisenkraft Recognized for Notable and Creative Contributions in Physics Education

College Park, Maryland, United States, March 25, 2009

The American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) announced today that Dr. Arthur Eisenkraft is the 2009 recipient of the Robert A. Millikan Medal. Eisenkraft is Distinguished Professor of Science Education and Director of the Center of Science and Math in Context (COSMIC), University of Massachusetts, Boston. This award recognizes educators who have made notable and creative contributions to the teaching of physics. It will be presented during the AAPT Summer Meeting at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, MI.



Lila Adair, Chairman, AAPT Awards Committee said, "Arthur Eisenkraft's active involvement with AAPT began in the late '80s, when he and a group of high school teachers began writing his popular Active Physics textbook. Due to his many achievements and his high level of activity in the area of physics education through the years, the Awards Committee is pleased to present him with the Millikan Medal."

Eisenkraft began his physics education at SUNY, Stony Brook where he earned both his B.S. and M.A before moving to New York University for his Ph.D in Science Education.

His teaching career began in Nepal while he was serving in the Peace Corp where he decided he wanted to teach physics. After completion of his studies, Eisenkraft began teaching at Fox Lane High School in Bedford, NY where he met AAPT Executive Director, Jack Wilson. Together the two educators created the process that identified and supported the first U.S. Physics Olympics Team to compete in the 1986 International Physics Olympiad. In 1991 Eisenkraft became the Executive Director of the XXIV International Physics Olympiad, hosted by the US for teams from 40 countries. He also served as academic director of the U.S. Physics Team for seven years. As an outgrowth of this work, he also helped found Quantum magazine. Dr. Eisenkraft was also the creator and director of the prestigious Toshiba Exploravision Awards; he has served as Chair of the Duracell Science Scholarship Competition for many years, and was the originator of the Toyota Tapestry Awards.

Perhaps Arthur Eisenkraft's single most significant contribution to AAPT and physics teaching has been his development of the Active Physics curriculum project, which was funded by research grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The goal of the project was to make physics interesting to students of all backgrounds so that they not only learn the material, but understand its application to their daily lives.

Warren Hein, Executive Officer of AAPT said, "AAPT is pleased and honored to recognize Arthur Eisenkraft with the Millikan Medal. Dr. Eisenkraft has made significant contributions to physics education as a teacher, textbook author, administrator, and through service to the profession as president of the National Science Teachers Association." He is very deserving of this honor for his many scholarly contributions to physics education and science education in general."

Dr. Eisenkraft is a previous recipient of AAPT's Distinguished Service Citation (1989) and the AAPT Excellence in Pre-College Teaching Award (1999).

Regarding the Millikan Medal, Eisenkraft stated, "It is hard to reconcile the wave of humility and sheer exuberance that I am feeling at having received this honor. It is an extraordinary recognition of the important work that involves so many of my fellow physics teachers. Two passions drive my professional life – my passion for physics and my passion for teaching. In the pursuit of my passions, I too often am confronted with inequities in our schools, inequities that prevent many of our students from getting access to a quality physics course, a quality physics teacher or an opportunity to discover and experience the joy of science. Addressing equity issues has become my third passion, because justice for children demands it."

More about this award on page 2.

About the Award

The Robert A Millikan Medal, established in 1962, recognizes teachers who have made notable and creative contributions to the teaching of physics. The recipient is asked to make a presentation at the Ceremonial Session of an AAPT Summer Meeting. A monetary award, The Millikan Medal, an Award Certificate, and travel expenses to the meeting are presented to the recipient.

Previous Awardees

2008, Eric Mazur, Harvard University

2007, David R. Sokoloff, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR

2006, Art Hobson, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

2005, John S. Rigden, Washington University in St. Louis, MO

2004, Kenneth S. Krane, Oregon State University, Corvallis

<http://www.aapt.org/Grants/millikan.cfm>

About AAPT

AAPT is an international organization for physics educators, physicists, and industrial scientists—with more than 10,000 members worldwide. Dedicated to enhancing the understanding and appreciation of physics through teaching, AAPT provides awards, publications, and programs that encourage teaching practical application of physics principles, support continuing professional development, and reward excellence in physics education. AAPT was founded in 1930 and is headquartered in the American Center for Physics in College Park, Maryland.

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