

John Dawson receives APS Maxwell plasma-physics prize

The American Physical Society has awarded its James Clerk Maxwell Prize for outstanding efforts in plasma physics to John M. Dawson of the University of California at Los Angeles. The Maxwell Prize consists of \$3500 and a certificate citing the contributions made by the recipient, and has been awarded annually since 1965. The citation recognized Dawson's "contributions to plasma physics and controlled fusion as both an innovative theorist and a prolific inventor, whose ideas have provided the basis for several fusion configurations." The certificate lauded Dawson's use of computer simulation as a new and powerful tool in the study of plasmas, and his role in inspiring and training a group of younger theorists to continue the development of computer simulation.

John Dawson, born in 1930 in Illinois, earned his BS from the University of Maryland in 1952. He remained at the University and received his master's (physics) in 1954, and his PhD (physics)



DAWSON

in 1956. Upon graduation, Dawson joined the Plasma Physics Laboratory at Princeton University as a research phys-

icist and in 1962 was named senior research physicist there. He served concurrently as associate head (1964) and then head (1966) of the Theoretical Group at the Plasma Physics Laboratory. After 17 years at Princeton, Dawson was appointed to the faculty of UCLA in 1973 and in 1976 was chosen director of the Center for Plasma Physics and Fusion Engineering at UCLA.

A former Chairman of The American Physical Society's Plasma Division in 1971 and elected to the National Academy of Science in 1977, Dawson has received numerous awards and distinctions for his work in plasma physics. He has published extensively on the topics of computer simulation of plasmas, radiation, kinetic theory and transport phenomena associated with plasmas. At the present time Dawson is proposing a number of advanced-concept fusion devices, particularly involving laser-produced plasmas, beam-driven fusion and multipole devices.

German Physical Society honors Walter Thirring

The German Physical Society (Deutsche Physikalische Gesellschaft) awarded its Max Planck Medal for 1977 to Walter Thirring in Karlsruhe, West Germany last month. Thirring was cited for his outstanding contributions in the fields of relativistic quantum theory and the physics of elementary particles.

Known for his "Thirring model," a model that permits the exact solution of certain equations in relativistic structure, Thirring has also been active in the areas of statistical mechanics and the physics of solids.

Thirring was born in Vienna in 1927 and received his PhD from the University of Vienna in 1949, where he returned to head the Institute for Theoretical Physics in 1959. He was a visiting professor at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies (1953-54), at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1965-57) and at the University of Washington, Seattle (1957-58). Recently Thirring published a book entitled *Textbook for Quantum Mechanics*. His current research focuses on problems

combining quantum mechanics and thermodynamics, such as the stability of systems composed of charged particles.

The Max Planck Medal is awarded annually by the Society for achievements in physics particularly relevant to the work of Max Planck.

Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory has announced the appointment of **Harry Dreicer** to head the Laboratory's Controlled Thermonuclear Research Division. Dreicer has been a Los Alamos staff member for 23 years.

William W. N. Yu, who has been a member of the physics department of City College of the City University of New York, has joined Hamamatsu Corp (Middlesex, N.J.) as product line manager.

Adrianus Korpel, formerly director of research in engineering physics at Zenith Radio Corporation has been named professor of information engineering at the University of Iowa, Iowa City.

The Argonne National Laboratory has appointed **Charles C. Baker** as director of

the Fusion Power Program. Baker came to Argonne from the General Atomic Company where he was responsible for fusion reactor design.

Former Presidential science adviser and current AAAS president-elect **Edward E. David Jr** has been named president of the Exxon Research and Engineering Co, in Florham Park, New Jersey.

George Gatewood of the department of physics and astronomy at the University of Pittsburgh has been chosen director of the University's Allegheny Observatory. Gatewood succeeds Joost Kiewiet de Jonge in the post; both will continue as faculty members of the recently merged department of physics and astronomy.

Joseph B. Aviles Jr has been named head of the radiation-matter interactions branch of the Naval Research Laboratory's Radiation Technology Division.

The Polish Physical Society has awarded its 1977 Marian Smoluchowski Medal to **Victor F. Weisskopf** in recognition of his "splendid contribution to science." The

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Formerly a research physicist at the Naval Research Laboratory, **Frank H. Attix** has been appointed professor of radiology at the University of Wisconsin.

Mahbub U. Alam has joined Arthur D. Little, Inc., as a senior staff member in the Electronic Systems Section. Alam was most recently the director of engineering

at the Jarrel-Ash Division of Fisher Scientific Company.

Formerly of Bell Laboratories, **Robert Behringer** has joined the faculty of Wesleyan University as assistant professor of physics and a member of the low-temperature physics group there.

J. Thomas Ratchford, former consultant to the House Committee on Science and Astronautics, was appointed associate executive officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science.

obituaries

Jesse W. Beams

Jesse W. Beams, nationally recognized research physicist and Professor Emeritus at the University of Virginia, died 23 July. He was 78 years old.

In a long and active career Beams made important contributions in several fields of physics: electro-optical phenomena, measurement of short times, electrical discharges, acceleration of ions and high-speed rotational devices. Perhaps his best known work was the development and use of the magnetic ultra-centrifuge. In 1967 he was awarded the National Medal of Science for developing the necessary technology for separating viruses and other biological forms from their carrying media, "opening a new realm in the study of life processes." In 1972 he was cited by the Atomic Energy Commission for his work on gas centrifuges to separate uranium isotopes.

Retiring from active teaching in 1969, Beams continued his research with significant contributions to physics and biophysics. One of these was the development of an ingenious method for measuring the constant of universal gravitation (PHYSICS TODAY, May 1971, page 34). All of Beams's work was characterized by a striking originality and ingenuity that continued to the end.

Beams was born in Belle Plains, Kansas in 1898. He received his PhD from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville in 1925. He went on to hold a National Research Fellowship at Virginia (1925-26) and at Yale University (1926-27). After a year teaching at Yale Beams returned to the University of Virginia as associate professor. In 1948 he was appointed chairman of the department of physics and continued in this role until 1962.

Beams's teaching was tremendously effective and characterized by example and collaboration rather than exhortation. An equally effective writer, he either wrote or was co-author for more than 236 articles, working on two additional manuscripts at the time of his death.



BEAMS

Past President of The American Physical Society (1958-59), Vice-President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1943) and a member of the National Academy of Arts and Sciences, Beams was honored by many awards and distinctions throughout his career.

It was a privilege to know Jesse Beams; not only does one remember the originality and keenness of his mind but also the warmth and kindness of his heart.

J. CURRY STREET
Physics Department
Harvard University

Joseph H. Keenan

Joseph H. Keenan, a towering figure in engineering thermodynamics and Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, died on 17 July.

Born in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. in 1900, Keenan earned his SB degree in 1922 at MIT in naval architecture and marine engineering. Until 1928 he was a turbine engineer with General Electric Company, where he first became interested in the properties of steam. From 1928 to 1934 he taught at the Stevens Institute of Tech-