Prize to **Philip Coppens**, a distinguished professor in the chemistry department at the State University of New York at Buffalo, for "his contribution to the experimental measurement and theoretical understanding of electron density distributions in crystals." The 1995 prize went to **Hugo M. Rietveld** of the Dutch Reactor Center in Petten, the Netherlands, for developing a widely used method for analyzing powder diffraction patterns.

OBITUARIES

Roman Smoluchowski

Roman Smoluchowski died in Austin, Texas, on 12 January 1996.

Born in Zakopane, Poland, on 31 August 1910, he received his master's degree in physics from the University of Warsaw in 1933 and a doctorate in physics and mathematics from the University of Groningen in The Netherlands in 1935. He then worked for a year at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton.

In 1936, Roman returned to Poland as head of the department of physics of metals at the University of Warsaw. Early during World War II, he escaped from German-occupied Poland, and an invitation from Princeton University to become an instructor in physics enabled him to come to the US, which then became his permanent home.

In 1941, Roman became a research physicist at the General Electric Research Laboratory in Schenectady, New York, and stayed until 1945. Between 1946 and 1959, he held professorships at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, first in metallurgy and eventually in physics. In addition, beginning in the early 1950s, he was associated with the solid-state physics group at Brookhaven National Laboratory, spending many summers there. In 1960, he returned to Princeton as a professor in the department of mechanical engineering and as the first director of the interdepartmental program in solid state and materials science. Roman remained its director until 1976.

At Princeton, Roman taught both undergraduate and graduate courses and maintained an active and prolific research program. He applied his knowledge of radiation damage phenomena to the structural nature of the lunar surface prior to the lunar landings during the Apollo missions. He also turned his attention to problems in solid-state astrophysics, including the gravitational collapse and the resulting interior structure and magnetic field of Jupiter and the outer planets. This work is now being tested with data from the Galileo spacecraft probe.

Roman retired from Princeton as professor of solid-state sciences emeritus in 1978 and became a professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Texas at Austin. In his later

ROMAN SMOLUCHOWSKI

work, he studied the interactions of dust and ice particles in space with their environment. This resulted in important new understandings of the properties of interstellar dust grains, planetary ring systems, the icy satellites of the outer planets and the thermal evolution of cometary nuclei.

During his scholarly career, Roman made important contributions to a number of areas: the role played by structural defects in the properties of solids, magnetism and order–disorder transformations in metals and alloys, the mechanisms of radiation damage, the formation mechanisms and stability of point defects in the alkali halides, the application of solid-state physics to the properties of biological hard tissue and materials problems in astrophysics. In the early 1960s, when several Brazilian universities were establishing modern research activities in materials science, Roman invited several physicists from Brazil to join his research activities in the US and also visited their home universities.

In the course of his career, he served on and chaired many advisory committees and boards for the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, the Department of Defense, Oak Ridge National Laboratory and several educational institutions. He was the first chair (in 1947) of the division of condensed matter physics of the American Physical Society.

Roman was a pleasure to work with, although it was not always easy to match his enthusiasm, energy and insight. He and his wife Louise made their home a welcoming place to colleagues and students. Roman will be remembered as someone who lived a full and contributory life, and we shall never forget his warm personality, his charm and his infectious booming laugh.

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George Bekefi

George Bekefi, a professor of physics at MIT since 1961, died on 17 August 1995 at the age of 70, following a battle with leukemia.

George was born to an artistic family in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Soon after the German occupation began in 1939, George made his way to England under the aegis of a private British organization that undertook to rescue Czech Jewish children. There he earned a BSc in physics from the University of London in 1948. Also in 1948, seeking adventures in the New World, George departed for Montreal, where he studied at McGill University. He received a PhD in physics in 1952 and stayed on as a lecturer and assistant professor. His research interests then were in electromagnetism, particularly the effects of wave diffraction on aberrations of optical systems.

In 1957, George joined Sanborn C. Brown and William P. Allis at MIT's Center of Gaseous Electronics in the Research Laboratory of Electronics (RLE). Gaseous electronics soon began to play an important role in the operation of the newly discovered laser, in which the ionized gas became the lasing medium. These MIT studies were eventually incorporated in a book that George edited: *Principles of Laser Plasmas* (Wiley, 1976).

At the Second Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, held in 1958 in Geneva, with controlled thermonuclear fusion declassified, new research vistas opened for many young scientists. At MIT, George and his students began to explore linear and