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University Distinguished Professor Lawrence Drzal honored with two national awards

The year of 2016 is one of recognition for University Distinguished Professor Lawrence T. Drzal of the Michigan State University College of Engineering.

Drzal, a University Distinguished Professor of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science and the director of the MSU Composite Materials and Structures Center, will receive two of his field’s most prestigious honors this year:

• the Medal of Excellence in Composite Materials from the University of Delaware and

• the 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award winner by the Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE®).

Drzal called the honors an unexpected surprise.

“I was first introduced to composite materials by Dr. Steven Tsai, one of the pioneers in the field, right after grad school when I was at the U.S. Air Force Materials Laboratory in Dayton, Ohio,” he said. “Steve was, and still is, a pioneer and an inspiration. It is a real honor to receive the award.”

Drzal noted that after accepting a position at MSU, he was able to build a foundation in aerospace composite materials.
“I have worked with dozens of talented grad students and postdocs to expand my research,” Drzal continued, “and to expand my research to composite materials for vehicles, plant fiber-based composites, and graphene nanoplatelet composites.”

Drzal considers himself fortunate to have collaborated with colleagues from the College of Engineering and to receive continuing support from college and university administrators. That resulted in the establishment of the Composite Materials and Structures Center at MSU, he explained.

“These awards are the result of many years of teamwork at all levels, and I am truly grateful,” Drzal added.

The 2016 Medal of Excellence in Composite Materials

The University of Delaware will present the 2016 Center for Composite Materials Medal of Excellence to Drzal during the 31st Technical Conference of the American Society for Composites, Sept. 19-22, in Williamsburg, Virginia. It will be awarded for significant contributions to composite materials through leadership, scholarly endeavor, invention, and economic enterprise. (See more in Composite World: http://bit.ly/1U7MJOk)

The Medal of Excellence in Composite Materials was established in 1984 in conjunction with the Decennial Celebration of the Center for Composite Materials of the University of Delaware. The medal carries the names and likenesses of the four initial recipients of the award: Zvi Hashin, Tsuyoshi Hayashi, Anthony Kelly, and Stephen W. Tsai.

A 2016 medal will also be presented to H. Daniel Wagner, the Livio Norzi Professor of Materials Science in the Department of Materials and Interfaces at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel.

The 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award, Society of Plastics Engineers

Drzal will be honored for his leading role in transportation composites innovations during the 46th Annual Automotive Innovation Awards Gala on Nov. 9, 2016, at Burton Manor (www.burtonmanor.net) in Livonia, Mich. He is the first academic winner of the award.
During his career Drzal has given more than 400 invited presentations at national and international conferences, published over 375 research papers, and has been awarded 35 patents.

First given in 2000, the SPE Automotive Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes the technical achievements of individuals whose work – in research, design, and/or engineering – has led to significant integration of polymeric materials on passenger vehicles. Past winners include J.T. Battenberg III, then chairman and chief-executive officer of Delphi Corp.; Irv Poston, retired head of the Plastics (Composites) Development-Technical Center, GM.; and Allan Murray, Ph.D., retired technology director at Ford Motor Co.

Lawrence T. Drzal

Over his long and distinguished career, Drzal has received numerous honors and awards including:

• 2016, University of Delaware's Medal of Excellence in Composite Materials;
• 2016, Lifetime Achievement Award, Automotive Division, Society of Plastics Engineers;
• 2015, Honorary Symposium Celebrating the Lifelong Achievements of Lawrence T. Dzral, American Society for Composites 30th Technical Conference at MSU;
• 2008, Best Technical Paper Award, Thermoset Division, Society of Plastics Engineers;
• 2006, Fellow, Society for the Advancement of Materials and Process Engineering (SAMPE);
• 2006, Educator of the Year, Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE) - Composites Division;
• 2005, Best Paper Award, Coatings for Plastics Symposium;
• 2004, Fellow, SPE;
• 2004, Fellow, American Society for Composites (ASC);
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• 2003, Highly Cited Materials Science Researcher, ISI;
• 2003, Best Paper Award, SPE Composites Division, ANTEC 2003;
• 2002, Fellow, American Institute of Chemists, Adhesion;
• 2002, Robert Patrick Fellow, The Adhesion Society, Adhesion Science;
• 2002, Member, European Academy of Sciences, Adhesion and Surface Modification of Polymers;
• 2002, Fellowship, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science;
• 1997, University Distinguished Professor, Michigan State University;
• 1997, Best Paper Award, ASC;
• 1996, Technomic Award, ASC, Outstanding Achievement in Research, Education and Service in the Field of Composite Materials;
• 1994, Award for Excellence in Adhesion Science Research, 3M and The Adhesion Society, Adhesion Science;
• 1993, Distinguished Faculty Award, Michigan State University;
• 1992, Edwin P. Plueddemann Award, Dow Corning and International Conference on Composite Interfaces, Excellence in Composites Interfacial Research;
• 1992, Withrow Distinguished Scholar Award, College of Engineering, Michigan State University;
• 1990, Best Academic Paper Award, Advanced Composites Conference;
• 1983, Best Paper Award, SAMPE Technical Conference;
• 1979, Charles J. Cleary Award, USAF Materials Laboratory, Scientific Materials Research Award;
• 1968-1971, National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Traineeship, Case Western Reserve University; and
• 1967, Engineer of the Year, College of Engineering, University of Detroit.

Drzal was co-director of the National Science Foundation State/Industry/University Center for Low-Cost, High-Speed Polymer Composites Processing at MSU from 1991-1999 and recently was appointed director of the Vehicle Technical Application Area in the Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation (IACMI).

His composite materials research is primarily in adhesion and the fiber-matrix interphase in polymer matrix composite materials reinforced with carbon, glass, polymeric and bio-based fibers and in multifunctional composites in which graphene nanoplatelets, cellulose nanofibers, and other nanoparticles added to the fiber-matrix interphase. He has over 400 peer reviewed research papers and 35 patents and was designated a "Highly Cited Researcher in Material Science" by ISIHighlyCited.com. He has received research awards from the Adhesion Society, U.S. Air Force Materials Laboratory, American Society for Composites, 3M, and Dow Corning.

Drzal has been elected a fellow of the American Society for Composites, Adhesion Society, American Institute of
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Chemists, Society of Plastics Engineers, and the Society for the Advancement of Material and Process Engineering. In 2007, Drzal co-founded XG Sciences, Inc., a private Michigan company that is currently the world’s largest manufacturer of graphene nanoplatelets using processes and technologies developed in his lab at MSU. He serves as its chief scientist.

Drzal earned a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering from University of Detroit and a PhD in chemical engineering and polymer science from Case Western Reserve University. He joined the MSU College of Engineering in 1985.

Related Website: MSU Composite Materials and Structures Center
SPE honors Dr. Drzal
Read more in Composites World
Communications contact: Patricia Mroczek

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