Awards and Accolades

University Communications
February 2023

Ofelia Zepeda named 2023 USA Art fellow

Ofelia Zepeda[1], Regents Professor in the Department of Linguistics, has been named a 2023 USA Art Fellow. The fellowship comes with a $50,000 unrestricted award to be used in any manner the artist wishes.

Zepeda, a member of the Tohono O’odham Nation, focuses her teaching and research on Native American language structures, literature and cultures. She has also edited poetic works and published multiple poetry collections, including "Ocean Power: Poems from the Desert" and "Jewed 'I-Hoi/Earth Movements." In 1999, she was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship.

The fellowship winners were announced on Jan. 24. You can learn more about Zepeda and read some of her work[2] on the United States Artists website.

United States Artists[3] is an organization devoted to supporting the country’s artists, their works and their cultural impacts.

James Webb Space Telescope team to receive award for space exploration


Marcia J. Rieke[7], Regents Professor of astronomy and the Elizabeth Roemer Endowed Chair, is the principal investigator for the James Webb Space Telescope’s near-infrared camera. Her colleague and husband, George H. Rieke[8], Regents Professor of astronomy and planetary sciences, serves as co-principal investigator and co-team leader on the telescope’s Mid-Infrared Instrument team.

In recognizing the team, Space Foundation CEO Tom Zelibor expressed his awe of the instrument. “This is an unparalleled achievement and is transforming astronomy and space science while delivering new inspiration and corner of our planet,” he said.

The award will be presented at Space Foundation’s opening ceremony of the annual Space Symposium on April 17. Learn more about the Riekes and their teams’ contributions to the telescope on the University’s James Webb Space Telescope website[9].

Five University scientists named AAAS Fellows

Five University scientists and faculty members have been named fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science[10] in recognition of scientific and socially notable achievements spanning their careers.

The honorees are:
- Michael Chertkov[11], professor in the Department of Mathematics and chair of the Graduate Interdisciplinary Program in applied mathematics, for his work in statistical physics.
- Gregory Davidowitz[12], professor of chemistry and University Distinguished Scholar, for his work in evolutionary physiology.
- Carmala Garzione[13], professor and dean of the College of Science, for her work in geoscience.
- Donata Vercelli[14], Regents Professor of cellular and molecular medicine, for her work in medical sciences.
- Dennis Zaritsky[15], professor of astronomy and deputy director of Steward Observatory[16], for his research concerning astronomical matter.

The 2022 class of fellows, announced last month, will be celebrated at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., this summer. Learn more about the University’s honorees and their work[17] on the University News website.

National Academy of Inventors picks 3 from the University to be senior members

The National Academy of Inventors has named three University professors as senior members. The Senior Member Program is a nomination-based membership that honors inventors whose creations have succeeded with patents, licensing or commercialization, and have brought beneficial impacts to society.

The new senior members are:
- Vijay Gokhale[18], associate research professor and senior research scientist at the BIOS Institute.
- Moe Momayez[19], associate professor of mining and geological engineering.
- Rongguang Liang[20], professor of optical sciences and director of the Imaging and Applied Optics Lab.

Gokhale, Momayez and Liang will be celebrated with the rest of the 2023 class at NAI’s annual June meeting in Washington, D.C. Learn more about the three and their inventions[21] on the Tech Launch Arizona website.

Cooper Center recognized for excellence in environmental education

The Cooper Center for Environmental Learning has received the 2022 EE Excellence Award[22] for an Outstanding Environmental Educational Program from the Association for Environmental Education[23]. The award honors programs that contribute to outdoor and environmental education initiatives.

Camp Cooper[24] is a University program dedicated to deepening society’s understanding of nature and ecology. Located across 10 acres of desert land, the Cooper Center for Environmental Learning invites schools, educators and community members to spend a day at the site and experience ecological intimacy and conservation firsthand. Camp Cooper also offers virtual programs[25] that explore topics like animal habitats, pollinators, predators and more.

The camp was nominated for the award by Laura Uccetta, whose son visited with his fourth grade class. “He left the program saying, ‘Why can’t we have school like this every day?’” Uccetta wrote in the nomination. “Not only that, but he was inspired to carry the things he learned at camp into his life every day, which is the ultimate goal of any environmental program.”

AAEE is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen Arizona’s environmental education and encourage environmental volunteering, especially in the form of educators. The award was announced at the AAEE annual ceremony in November.

Nursing professor honored with excellence award

Lisa Kiser, assistant clinical professor in the College of Nursing, is being honored with the American Association of Nurse Practitioners’ State Award for Excellence[26] in Arizona.

Kiser’s work focuses on health equity and increasing access to cervical cancer screenings for underprivileged women. “I am truly honored to receive this award, as it represents the work that all nurse practitioners are doing to increase health equity in the United States,” she said. “I am grateful for the opportunity to help educate the next generation of health care providers to be change leaders in our country.”

The State Award for Excellence winners will be recognized during the 2023 AANP National Conference, which will take place in New Orleans in June. Learn more about Kiser’s achievement[27] on the College of Nursing website.

We want to know about your good news. If you, your team or a colleague has won any major awards, been honored nationally or internationally, or has accomplished some other major feat that deserves recognition, let us know about it.
To submit your news, please send us an email with the following information:

- Name of the person, team or unit receiving the honor with full University titles.
- Information about the award/honor and the organization that granted it.
- Please include a link to the official announcement of the award/honor.
- When the honor was announced and when it will be presented (or was presented).
- A photo of the honoree. If others appear in the photo, please provide their names and identifying information, such as their University title or other affiliation.

Questions? Contact Lo Que Pasa at uaatwork@email.arizona.edu.

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Source URL: https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/awards-and-accolades-79