



## Fall 2008 Accolades for Physics Faculty and Alumnus

December 11, 2008

The physics department garnered a number of honors this fall, with faculty members (current and emeritus) from atomic, condensed matter, and nuclear physics winning recognition for their contributions to their respective research areas.

**Professor and Department Head Soren Sorensen and Professor Pengcheng Dai** have been elected [Fellows of the American Physical Society](#).

Sorensen, who works in nuclear physics experiment, was cited "for his important contributions to the field of relativistic heavy ion collisions, in particular for systematic studies of stopping and transverse energy production, and for his early leadership in the PHENIX offline computing framework and in establishing the program of J/psi measurements at RHIC" (the [Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider](#) at Brookhaven National Lab). He was nominated by the Division of Nuclear Physics.



Pengcheng Dai



Soren Sorensen

Dai, a condensed matter experimentalist, was cited "for his contribution to understand fundamental properties of magnetic excitations in high-transition temperature superconductors, f-electron heavy Fermions, and colossal magneto-resistance manganites" and was nominated by the Topical Group on Magnetism and Its Applications. Earlier this fall he was named a [JIAM Chair of Excellence](#) for his outstanding research record.

**Distinguished Scientist Ward Plummer** has been elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was honored for the development of instrumentation and its use to illuminate new concepts in the surface physics of materials, and for the mentoring of promising young scientists. Plummer is one of [10 University of Tennessee, Knoxville, faculty members elected](#) as members of the 2008 class of AAAS Fellows.



Joseph Macek alongside his portrait at the Ioffe Institute

**Distinguished Professor Joseph Macek** has been elected as a member of the Scientific Council of the [Ioffe-Physical-Technical Institute](#) in St. Petersburg, Russia. The Ioffe Institute is one of Russia's largest institutions for research in physics and technology and is affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences. It was founded in 1918 and run for several decades by the Russian scholar Abram F. Ioffe. Macek's research specialty is theoretical atomic physics and he has worked with Research Professor Sergei Ovchinnikov (also of the Ioffe Institute) on analytical and numerical techniques to describe proton-hydrogen and electron-hydrogen collisions. The formal presentation of the honor was October 31 in tandem with a celebration of the institute's 90th anniversary.



Ward Plummer

The Faculty of Science at the [University of Gothenburg](#) (Sweden) honored **Professor Emeritus David Pegg** with the degree of *Doctor Honoris Causa* at a promotion ceremony on October 24. The award was presented in recognition of his work as a world-leading atomic physicist for almost four decades and for his contributions to the University of Gothenburg through his research collaborations with both faculty and students there. David Turner, Dean of the Faculty of Science, wrote in his invitation letter to Pegg: "You have contributed to successful research and research training, thereby inspiring our students both during their academic studies and for their future careers."

In the same vein, **Professor Witold Nazarewicz** will be recognized in July 2009 with the honorary degree of Doctor of the [University of the West of Scotland](#). The University Court awards the DUniv to persons who have made outstanding contributions to the university and to those who have earned recognition for their academic work. They chose Nazarewicz for the honor as a fitting way to mark his very distinguished career. He was a 2008 Carnegie Centenary Professor, giving lectures and invited talks at Scottish universities from March through May. He is the first person representing nuclear physics to hold this prestigious honor.



Witold Nazarewicz

**Saskia Mioduszewski** (Ph.D., 1999) is the 2009 recipient of the Maria Goeppert Mayer Award from the American Physical Society. Named for the 1963 Nobel Laureate, this award recognizes outstanding achievement by a female physicist in the early years of her career. Mioduszewski is an experimental nuclear physicist



Saskia Mioduszewski

and was cited "for her pioneering contributions to the observation of jet quenching and her continuing efforts to understand high- $p_T$  phenomena in relativistic heavy-ion collisions." She received a B.S. in physics and mathematics in 1994 from North Carolina State University. Following completion of the doctoral degree at UT Knoxville, she worked at Brookhaven National Laboratory on the PHENIX experiment at the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC). In 2005, she moved to Texas A&M University as an assistant professor and became a member of the STAR Collaboration at RHIC, where she continues to pursue her interest in high-energy heavy-ion collisions. She received the Department of Energy Presidential Early Career Award in 2004 and was awarded an Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship in 2006.



David Pegg being honored with the *Doctor Honoris Causa*