

[Chemical & Engineering News](#)

Serving the chemical, life sciences and laboratory worlds

[Latest News](#)

[Home](#) » [Latest News](#) » Zare Named Priestley Medalist

June 8, 2009

Awards

Zare Named Priestley Medalist

Stanford chemist honored for lifetime of scientific achievement and service to chemistry

[Celia Henry Arnaud](#)



L. A. Cicero/Stanford News Service

Zare

[Richard N. Zare](#), 69, the Marguerite Blake Wilbur Professor in Natural Science and Howard Hughes Medical Institute Professor at Stanford University, will receive the 2010 Priestley Medal. The annual award, which is the highest honor bestowed by the American Chemical Society, recognizes distinguished service to the field of chemistry.

"I'm very delighted to receive this honor," Zare says, "but there are so many other deserving people, too."

"Dick Zare is a superb choice for the Priestley Medal," says Dudley Herschbach, a Nobel laureate and emeritus chemistry professor at Harvard University. "His research is wonderfully innovative, immensely fruitful, and of amazing scope. His teaching, mentoring, and public service are likewise extraordinary. Moreover, Zare is a delightfully ebullient, evangelical speaker."

"There is hardly anyone else, worldwide, who can lay claim to having contributed more to the field of physical chemistry, who has excelled in teaching, and who has been so active in service to the field of chemistry," says Gerald J. Diebold, a professor of chemistry at Brown University.

Zare is "a true chemistry hero, as he has devoted countless hours to the promotion of the field to young and old alike," says Harry B. Gray, a professor of chemistry at California Institute of Technology. "He is a dynamo whose passion for chemistry seemingly knows no limits."

Zare has made many scientific contributions to the field of chemistry, particularly in laser spectroscopy. He introduced laser-induced fluorescence as a method for studying reaction dynamics and as a sensitive detection method for analytical chemistry. For example, laser-induced fluorescence was the detection technique used to sequence the human genome, Zare points out.

Zare has also been active in public service. He was a member of the National Science Board (the governing body of the National Science Foundation) from 1992 to 1998 and its chairman from 1996 to 1998. "He was enormously effective in that demanding role, taking on important thorny problems and working in partnership with the director to ensure that

NSF avoided political meddling and was able to move forward with good budgets and programs to support the nation's best research ideas and the best people to pursue them," says Neal Lane, who was NSF director when Zare was on the NSB. "We are all indebted to him for his contributions to science and the nation."

Zare received a bachelor's degree in chemistry and physics from Harvard University in 1961 and a Ph.D. in chemical physics from the same institution in 1964, working with Herschbach. He became an assistant professor of chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1965, but moved to the University of Colorado, Boulder, in 1966, where he held joint appointments in the departments of chemistry and physics & astrophysics. In 1969, he became a full professor at Columbia University. He has been a chemistry professor at Stanford University since 1977.

Zare has received many awards throughout his career, including the Fresenius Award from Phi Lambda Upsilon, the Welch Award in Chemistry, and the Wolf Prize in Chemistry, among many others. He is a member of ACS, the National Academy of Sciences, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is a fellow of the American Physical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Association for Women in Science.

Chemical & Engineering News

ISSN 0009-2347

Copyright © 2009 American Chemical Society