



Colin Johnson Honored with 2011 ASTC Fellow Award for Outstanding Contribution

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BALTIMORE – Colin Johnson, former director and CEO of Techniquest in Cardiff, Wales, was presented with the *ASTC Fellow Award for Outstanding Contribution*, the highest honor bestowed by the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC). Johnson accepted the award today from Lesley Lewis, ASTC's immediate past president and the CEO of the Ontario Science Centre, Toronto, Canada, during ASTC's 2011 Annual Conference. The conference, the premier professional development opportunity for science center professionals, is hosted this year by the Maryland Science Center.

The *ASTC Fellow Award* is presented to individuals who merit special recognition for their significant contributions to the advancement of public understanding and appreciation of science and technology, or of ASTC itself. First presented in 1974, it was most recently awarded in 2009 to Bonnie VanDorn, ASTC's former executive director, upon her retirement.

The text of Johnson's award reads, "The Board of Directors and Members of the Association of Science-Technology Centers hereby present the Fellow Award for Outstanding Contribution to Colin Johnson for his distinguished career as a chemist and educator, from the classroom to the museum. Colin's determined advocacy, tactful diplomacy, and persuasive compositions have helped build bridges within the field and between science centers and the people they serve. His generosity and dedication know no limits."

During his time at Techniquest, Johnson achieved a great deal. He helped secure annual funding from the Welsh Assembly Government, established an international business for exhibit sales and consulting, set up three satellite centres elsewhere in the United Kingdom, and oversaw the creation of numerous new exhibits and projects, including *Musiquest*, all designed and built by Techniquest. Colin also helped launch *CommQuest*, a partnership between the Commonwealth Science Council and Techniquest designed to support and enrich the existing provision of science education in developing countries and regions of the Commonwealth and to promote and build confidence and understanding of science and technology. Twenty interactive exhibits, along with an associated education program, toured a series of venues around South Africa and still travel as *SciQuest* in South Africa today.

Johnson has tirelessly and generously served the entire science center field. His involvement with ASTC includes service as: a Board member for six years; co-chair of the International Committee; a member of the Nominating Committee; and chair of the IGLO project's International Advisory Group, and he currently is an editorial advisor for *Dimensions* magazine. He has also played a variety of key roles within Ecsite (the European Science Centre network) and Ecsite-UK/the UK Association of Science and Discovery Centres, and both organizations have awarded him honorary memberships. He was an Ecsite Board member for four years, a staff member of the Ecsite "Science Centre Academy" for three years and the "Chemistry for Life" project lead partner for three years.

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Made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire "for services to science" in the Queen's New Year's Honours list of 2004, Johnson is an honorary Fellow of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and was awarded the Honorary Distinguished Service Award from the Australian Science Teachers Association. Since stepping down as Techniquest CEO in 2004, he has remained active and engaged in the science centre field, mentoring public engagement projects supported by the UK Research Councils, monitoring capital projects funded by the Wellcome Trust, serving as a national judge for the Rolls Royce Science Prize for schools, and assisting with various projects with emerging science centers.

About ASTC

The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) is a global nonprofit organization of science centers and museums committed to raising public understanding of science's role in solving critical societal issues, and its value in igniting and nurturing the innovative spirit that people of all ages need for success in today's world. Founded in 1973, ASTC now numbers nearly 600 members in 45 countries, and its members include not only science centers and museums, but also nature centers, aquariums, planetariums, zoos, botanical gardens, and natural history and children's museums, as well as companies, consultants, and other organizations that share an interest in informal science education. Visit www.astc.org to learn more about ASTC and to find a science center near you.

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