



ASTC Announces 2015 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award Recipients

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Three ASTC-member institutions and three science center/museum professionals were named 2015 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award recipients earlier today by the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC). Presented annually, the awards recognize extraordinary accomplishments in Business Practice, Visitor Experience, and Leadership in the Field during the last three years. Now in its 11th year, the “Edgies” commemorate the late Roy L. Shafer, a former science center director, ASTC president, organizational coach, and mentor to many in the science center and museum field.

The recipients will receive an etched glass Edgie award and a complimentary registration to the 2015 ASTC Annual Conference, October 17-20 in Montréal, Quebec, Canada. The awards will be presented Monday, October 19 in the Palais de congrès de Montréal.

The 10-member jury awarded the Leading Edge Award for Business Practice to **Carnegie Science Center**, Pittsburgh, for the Carnegie STEM Excellence Pathway, a process by which school systems, individual schools, departments, or individual teachers can improve their science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education practices through a collaborative approach. The pathway focuses on continuous growth and long-term strategic goals. Pathway Partners can continuously evaluate their practices using a rubric tool that is available online. In the first year, 137 schools and districts in nine states and the District of Columbia have become Pathway Partners, reaching over 2,000 schools and 2.1 million students. The pathway has not only created a funding stream for the science center but has also met community needs. The jury praised the pathway’s wide reach and realistic approach in helping integrate the goals of both science centers and museums and one of their main stakeholder groups.

Kansas City’s Science Center, Science City, Missouri, received an Edgie for Visitor Experience, a reflection of its successful transformation in recent years. By focusing on regional educational priorities and partnering with local businesses, the science center has transformed more than 50% of its space over the past three years. Community validation has come in the forms of increased revenue, attendance, reputation, and visitor satisfaction. One prime example of programming that promotes experiential learning and community investment is the Burns & McDonnell Battle of the Brains. This competition, open to local elementary and secondary schools, challenges all students to design and inspire new exhibits and experiences for the science center. The jury found how Kansas City’s Science Center, Science City changed its perception in the community and developed a model of long-term success to be inspirational to other institutions.

Norsk Teknisk Museum, Oslo, Norway, also received an Edgie for Visitor Experience for *TING—Teknologi og Demokrati*. This exhibition celebrates the 100th anniversary of the museum’s founding and the Norwegian Constitution by hosting debates exploring the

relationships between technology and democracy. In ancient times, the word *ting* described a communal gathering for discussion, often in a circular space with a table at the center. *TING* brings the public to a circular table to engage in discourse about controversial *tings* (“things”) representative of technological impacts on Norwegian society. Visitors are immersed in an audiotchnological presentation of each *ting*. They then participate in a moderated discussion and cast their votes with wooden blocks. *TING* demonstrates the museum’s role as a space for public discourse and inspires visitors to take an active role in community decisions. The jury was incredibly impressed by the exhibition’s concept, integrating past and present venues for community dialogue with past and present technological objects that have impacted society.

The Edgie for Leadership in the Field (executive leadership) was awarded to **Huanchen Zuo**, board chair of Shanghai Science & Technology Museum (SSTM), who is China’s first Edgie recipient. Zuo has led various initiatives to promote science education that have advanced SSTM’s global reputation and extended its reach. For example, Enjoying the Sunshine of Science invites 5,000 children of migrant workers to the museum annually, and the Mobile Science Museum brings the museum to Chinese rural areas. Zuo’s dedication to youth education led to the Future Science Star competition and the Shanghai Science Education Innovation Award. Zuo has strengthened cooperation between local government leaders to open a new Shanghai Natural History Museum as a branch of SSTM. Additionally, she has collaborated with organizations abroad to launch the annual Global Natural History Day and Shanghai International Nature Conservation Week. The jury honored Zuo for her visionary leadership and initiatives that will truly change the lives of rural youth in China.

Marilyn Johnson, recently retired science director at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), Portland, is a recipient of the Edgie for Leadership in the Field (nonexecutive leadership). In over 19 years of service, Johnson has led several projects that engage underserved communities, including Latinas en Ciencia, and the Science, Technology, and Rural Students (STARS) project, which won a 2007 Edgie for Visitor Experience. Johnson’s efforts to advance diversity extend beyond OMSI to her work with the Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network (NISE Net), Girls RISE (Raising Interest in Science and Engineering) Museum Network (Girls RISEnet), and Science Museum Exhibit Collaborative. Her dedication to inclusivity has left a lasting impact, not only on OMSI but also on the entire informal science education (ISE) field. The jury recognized her pioneering work in diversity that has had a lasting impact on her institution and the field.

Larry Bell, senior vice president, strategic initiatives, at the Museum of Science, Boston, also received an Edgie for nonexecutive leadership. Bell’s leadership has impacted the ways in which visitors engage with science across the science center field. At his own museum, Bell implemented a strategic exhibit plan, Science Is an Activity, which took constructivist approaches to offer visitors practice with science thinking skills. He later launched Forum programs to engage the public in dialogue about societal impacts of science and technology, and the public’s role in public policy. Bell is the principal investigator (PI) of the NISE Net, a National Science Foundation (NSF)–funded initiative that built the field’s capacity to partner with researchers to engage the public in cutting-edge science, engineering, and technology. Under Bell’s leadership, the NISE Net has grown to include 350 ISE organizations and over 200 university groups. The jury recognized his tireless, forward-thinking leadership that has nurtured growth and collaboration in the field like never before.

Serving on this year’s jury were **Jan Luth** (chair), Exploration Place, Wichita, Kansas; **Adrienne Barnett**, the Thinkery, the New Austin Children’s Museum, Texas; **Toph Bryant**, Kentucky Science Center, Louisville; **Jonah Cohen**, McWane Science Center, Birmingham, Alabama; **Andrea A. Durham**, Science World British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada;

Maribel Garcia, the Mind Museum, Manila, Philippines; **Kathy Gustafson-Hilton**, Hands On! Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida; **Michele Laverly**, National Ag Science Center, Modesto, California; **Troy Livingston**, the Thinkery, the New Austin Children's Museum, Texas; and **Harry White**, At-Bristol Science Centre, Bristol, England, United Kingdom. ASTC thanks the jury for their service and Hands On! Inc. for its support.

About ASTC

The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) is a global organization providing collective voice and professional support for science centers, museums, and related institutions, whose innovative approaches to science learning inspire people of all ages about the wonders and the meaning of science in their lives. Through strategic alliances and global partnerships, ASTC strives to increase awareness of the valuable contributions its members make to their communities and the field of informal STEM learning. Founded in 1973, ASTC now represents over 640 members in nearly 50 countries, including 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. For more information about ASTC, or to find a science center near you, visit www.astc.org.

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