Science Societies

William Jury receives Kirkham Gold Medal honors

By Jirka Simunek, former member of the Don and Betty Kirkham Gold Medal Committee; and Ole Wendroth, former SSSA President and Past Chair of the Don and Betty Kirkham Gold Medal Committee

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Every eight years, the Soil Science Society of America awards the Don and Betty Kirkham Soil Physics Gold Medal, a highly competitive award, to a deserving recipient. The medal commemorates the unexcelled career achievement of those most extraordinary individuals throughout the world who have uniquely contributed to soil physics because of their inspirational teaching, research, and professional activities.

This year's winner is William A. Jury, who will receive the medal at this year's Kirkham Conference in Fukushima, Japan (Aug. 18-22, 2025).

Jury is just the third recipient of the medal. Previous recipients were Donald R. Nielsen (2008) and Rien van Genuchten (2016).

William "Bill" Jury received a B.S. in Physics from the University of Michigan and a Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Wisconsin in 1973. He came to the University of California—Riverside (UCR) in 1974 and spent his entire career there before retiring in

2008 as a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Environmental Sciences. His main research areas while at UCR were in the detection of contamination in water and soil and water management and conservation.

Over his research career, he published 225 papers and four books and was ranked as one of the 100 most frequently cited researchers in the world in the fields of Engineering and Environmental Science. He received the USDA Secretary's Honor Award for Environmental Protection in Washington, DC in 1999, and in 2000, he was one of 72 U.S. scientists elected to the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. While at UCR, he received both the Graduate Student Association and Faculty Senate Distinguished Teaching Awards and served as the first Chair of the Faculty Academy of Distinguished Teaching.

During his career at UCR, he served in administration as Department Chair, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel, and Interim Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost before retiring in 2008.

In addition to the Don and Betty Kirkham Soil Physics Gold Medal, SSSA also presents the annual Don and Betty Kirkham Soil Physics Award.

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