

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

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LeighAnnConnPrize@louisville.edu**UofL's first renewable energy prize goes to Swiss chemist Michael Graetzel**
Nominations for 2015 Leigh Ann Conn Prize due by Dec. 31, 2014

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Swiss chemist Michael Graetzel, noted for his discovery of a new solar cell that is easier and less costly to produce than silicon-based cells, has won the first \$50,000 Leigh Ann Conn Prize for Renewable Energy from the University of Louisville.

Graetzel, professor and director of the Laboratory of Photonics and Interfaces at the École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, is recognized for merging nanoscience with photoconversion by developing the dye-sensitized solar cell, known as the “Graetzel cell.”

These cells convert sunlight into electricity using earth-abundant materials at efficiencies exceeding thin-film silicon-based cells; however, production costs are dramatically lower. Mass production began in 2009.

Graetzel, one of the most highly cited chemists worldwide, holds more than 50 patents and has written two books and more than 1,200 publications. His concepts have spawned hundreds of research groups and multiple conferences.

In spring 2014, he will give a public talk in Louisville about his winning work and receive the Conn Prize medal and award, which recognizes outstanding renewable energy ideas and achievements with proven global impact.

“Dr. Graetzel is the international leader in making solar energy more efficient, practical and affordable. The University of Louisville values his research, and we are proud that he is the first winner of the Leigh Ann Conn Prize,” said UofL President James Ramsey, who will confer the award.

The prize, managed by UofL's Conn Center for Renewable Energy Research at the J.B. Speed School of Engineering, is named for the late daughter of Hank and Rebecca Conn, who are center supporters and the prize benefactors.

“Recognizing renewable energy innovations of such high caliber is a wonderful way to memorialize Leigh Ann,” Hank Conn said. “We are excited because the science is proven and it's being translated into the world. The choice of Michael Graetzel mirrors the work conducted at the Conn Center and reinforces everything we've strived for these past five years. She would be proud.”

Nominations for the 2015 Leigh Ann Conn Prize competition run January 1 to December 31, 2014; criteria and directions are at www.conncenter.org/leigh-ann-conn-prize. For more information, contact Andrew Marsh at 502-852-8597 or LeighAnnConnPrize@louisville.edu.

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EDITORS: A downloadable photo of Graetzel is available at <http://www.conncenter.net/news/GRAETZEL.jpg>