

ASTRONOMER AND AUTHOR STEPHEN MARAN WINS 2011 GEMANT AWARD

American Institute of Physics (AIP) Prize Awarded to Renowned Science Communicator

College Park, Md. (May 4, 2011) -- The American Institute of Physics (AIP) has chosen renowned science writer and astronomer Stephen P. Maran, Ph.D., as the 2011 recipient of the **Andrew W. Gemant Award**, which is given annually for significant contributions to the cultural, artistic, or humanistic dimension of physics.

Maran has decades of experience in the space program, having retired from NASA in October 2004, after more than 35 years with the agency. He has authored or edited twelve books and more than 100 popular articles on astronomy and space exploration, and many more scientific publications.

In August 2009, Maran retired from his 25-year post (mostly overlapping with NASA service) as Press Officer of the American Astronomical Society (AAS). As Press Officer, Maran oversaw news events announcing many of the most important discoveries in all of space science, including topics ranging from alien exoplanets to primordial galaxies at the edge of the known Universe.

"Steve Maran has earned the respect of journalists and scientists alike for his peerless work in communicating the wonder and discovery of astronomy and astrophysics," says Catherine O'Riordan, AIP Vice President, Physics Resources. "The Gemant Award was founded to honor remarkable individuals, like Steve, who have made a lasting and meaningful impact on the public's understanding and appreciation of science."

Upon hearing of his selection, Maran commented, "I'm immensely grateful for the award, and especially for the confidence in me expressed by my colleagues and the AIP."

Maran's articles about science for the public have appeared in *Smithsonian*, *Natural History*, *Popular Science*, *Scientific American*, *Sky & Telescope*, and *Astronomy* magazines, in ten encyclopedias and encyclopedia year books, and in invited contributions to *The Washington Post*.

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His two most recent books, both written jointly with Laurence A. Marschall and published in 2009, are “Galileo’s New Universe: The Revolution in Our Understanding of the Cosmos” and “Pluto Confidential: An Insider Account of the Ongoing Battles over the Status of Pluto”.

His other books include “Astronomy for Dummies®”, published in English, Chinese, French, German, Russian, Bulgarian and Dutch; “The Astronomy and Astrophysics Encyclopedia” (with Foreword by Carl Sagan); a college text, “New Horizons in Astronomy” written with John C. Brandt, which was also published in Arabic; and “Gems of Hubble”, written with Jacqueline Mitton.

In 2000, *the Dallas Morning News* wrote, “Dr. Maran takes up where Carl Sagan left off, telling the story of space to anybody who’s interested. Except that Dr. Maran is funnier.”

Maran received his master’s and doctorate degrees in astronomy from the University of Michigan in 1961 and 1964, respectively, and his bachelor’s in physics from Brooklyn College in 1959, after graduating from Stuyvesant High School in New York City (1955).

The annual award is made possible by a bequest of Andrew Gemant to the AIP. It consists of \$5,000 cash to the winner and a grant of \$3,000 to further the public communication of physics at an academic institution the winner chooses. Gemant winners are also invited to deliver a public lecture on a topic of their choice. Maran plans to give his Andrew W. Gemant Lecture at the AAS’ 219th semiannual meeting in Austin, Texas, in January 2012.

Previous recipients include scientists Freeman Dyson, Stephen Hawking, and Brian Greene; and author Marcia Bartusiak, producer Paula Apsell, and many others.

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[ABOUT THE GEMANT AWARD](#)

The recipient of the Andrew W. Gemant Award is named by the AIP Governing Board during its annual spring meeting. Selection is based on the recommendation of an outside Selection Committee appointed by the Institute’s Board Chairman. For more information, see: <http://www.aip.org/aip/awards/gemawd.html>

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