

AVS Recognition for Excellence in Leadership Presented to Alex Demkov

The AVS Membership Committee is recognizing Alex Demkov, The University of Texas at Austin, for Excellence in Leadership. The AVS seeks to recognize individuals who not only excel in science and/or engineering, but who also, through mentoring, have enhanced the careers of future generations who might not otherwise have considered or had access to opportunities in science, engineering, and technology. Their leadership in the effort to develop fully the world's human resources is critical to the best scientific and engineering progress. Recipients of this honor will have their profile displayed on the AVS Website, featured in this Newsletter and will receive a certificate of recognition. [Click here for eligibility & nominations criteria.](#)



Q: Describe a typical day in your life.

A: The alarm goes off about 6:30 a.m. and we get the kids ready for school. Then there is time for a cup of coffee and quick look through the newspaper. I am at work slightly after nine, at the gym at six and back at home at eight. Then there is an evening with the family, then a bit more work and finally, walking the dog under the southern stars.

Q: What are your leisurely interests and activities?

A: My main leisure interests are reading and tennis.

Q: Choose one word you feel explains you best.

A: Curious

Q: What do you feel you are best known for?

A: Probably, I am best known for my theoretical work on high-k dielectrics for FETs.

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

A: Most of all, I enjoy working with graduate students and giving lectures.

Q: Is there a quote you live by or that inspires you, if so what is it?

A: Yes, it is an old Russian proverb, "Your eyes are scared, but your hands are doing it." A favorite quote is one John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail, "We can't guarantee success but we can do something better; we can deserve it."

Q: Who has encouraged you throughout your career and/or life? Inspired you?

A: My mother encouraged me and made my father my inspiration.

Q: Did you have a mentor?

A: I had many mentors, who have a profound effect on my development. Two have to be mentioned, my high school physics teacher Vladimir Vladimirovich Bronfman, though he wasn't particularly impressed by my abilities, never the less, he did everything to keep me interested. Most of all, I owe a debt of gratitude to my Ph.D. advisor Professor Otto F. Sankey who believed in me, gave me the skill and taught me many valuable lessons in life.

Q: How did you become affiliated with AVS?

A: I started coming to the PCSI meeting and really liked the people who were involved with it.

Q: Have you always wanted to be a member? What motivated you to join?

A: Again, it was mostly about the people, Jack Dow, Gerry Lucovsky, Andy Kummel, and Chris Palmstrom, to name a few.

Q: Do you belong to any other organizations?

A: Yes, of course, I am also a member of the American Physical Society, Materials Research Society and IEEE.

Q: What has been your paramount experience with AVS?

A: Oh, I am not sure about the Society at large, but I really enjoy my interactions and comradery with the people working on surface sand interfaces. There is a clear sense of community among these people.

Q: What is the next big step in your career you plan on tackling?

A: I have no big career moves planned; I would just like to do good science. But part of the life's charm is that from time to time, opportunities do present themselves and I try to keep an open mind.

Q: If you could leave one piece of advice for our future generations, whether it is science related or not, what would it be?

A: Pactum serva!