

## AVS Recognition for Excellence in Leadership Presented to Michele Manuel

The AVS Membership Committee is recognizing Michele Manuel, University of Florida 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.](#)



### Interview with Michele Manuel

Q: Describe a typical day in your life.

A: My two-year-old son Alexander typically wakes me up in the morning. We hastily get dressed and ready for the day. When I get to work, I check my calendar to organize my schedule. The rest of the day is filled with meetings with faculty, students and staff, in addition to teaching. I end the day back in mommy mode.

Q: What are your leisurely interests and activities?

A: Traveling.

Q: Choose one word you feel explains you best.

A: Driven.

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

A: Being ambitious. Maybe too much so...

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

A: I have been lucky to have some really great jobs in my life. My first was part of a high school internship program at a nearby air force base, Eglin AFB. I was working with a group, whose location was on the air force reservation in the panhandle of Florida, which was conveniently on the beach. The best part of the day was driving in to work. Once I passed through the security clearance, I had 2 miles of un-touched white, sandy beaches ahead of me. I was so lucky.

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

A: I have many quotes that I inspires me:

- "Be yourself; everyone else is already taken" - Oscar Wilde
- "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." - Mahatma Gandhi
- "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." - Eleanor Roosevelt
- Favorite quote?
- "You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams." - Dr. Seuss

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

A: My parents. I am a first generation college graduate and I was amazed at how my parents made as far as they did, and kept the family together. My father's side of the family worked on a cotton farm, picking cotton by hand. They were sharecroppers, using the cotton as payment for living on the land. My mother was raised in post-WWII Japan. They both came from very poor families. I admire their resilience in a chaotic world. The challenges they had to surmount to get me to college is inspiring.

Q: Did you have a mentor?

A: Yes I have many mentors, even those who might think they are colleagues but are really mentors. I classify them by categories to which they fulfill this mentorship role:

1. I got a quick question mentor: Professor Susan Sinnott, (University of Florida)
2. Navigating the university mentor: Dean Cammy Abernathy (University of Florida)
3. "What do you think" mentor: Chair Simon Phillipot (University of Florida)
4. Technical mentor: Dr. Anil Sachdev (General Motors), Professor Greg Olson (Northwestern University)
5. Professional mentor: Dr. Anil Sachdev (General Motors), Professor Wayne Jones (University of Michigan)

6. Can talk about anything mentor: Professor Wayne Jones (University of Michigan)

Q: How did you become affiliated with AVS?

A: My connection to AVS is through Susan Sinnott.

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

A: I really was interested in joining AVS since the University of Florida Materials Science and Engineering department has such a strong tie to the society.

Q: Do you belong to any other organizations?

A: I also belong to TMS, ASM, Alpha Sigma Mu - Materials Science Honor Society, Golden Key Honor Society.

Q: What was your reaction upon winning your award with AVS?

A: Complete shock and then humbled by the recognition.

Q: What other awards or acknowledgements have you won recently?

A: TMS Early Career Faculty Fellow (2013); ASM Bradley Stoughton Award for Young Teachers (2013); University of Florida Excellence Award for Assistant Professors (2013); University of Florida Departmental Faculty Excellence Award (2013); NASA Early Career Award (2012); White House Invitation from Michelle Obama for Press Release on Family Friendly Practices at NSF (1 of 14 early career awardees invited) (2011); NSF Career Award (2009); TMS Young Leader Professional Development Award (2009).

Q: What has been your paramount experience with AVS?

A: This is actually my first year with AVS. I am looking forward to having a paramount experience with the Society sometime in the future.

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

A: I am going up for tenure this year, so this is on my immediate radar.

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: Make the system work for you. I think that we are all too quick to stay within the lines and follow traditional pathways to success. What works for others may not work for you.

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