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### Preface

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## Preface

The National Association for Science, Technology and Society (NASTS), with the cooperation of the Federation of Materials Societies, organized a Symposium honoring the most significant advances in materials research. The symposium took place on September 26, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

The rationale for the symposium was explained in the following "vision" statement: In an era when the public and its representatives are dramatically changing their expectations of science from esoteric, stimulative ideas to exoteric, concrete advances that can contribute toward a stable economy and cleaner environment, the present mechanism for presenting advances (too often labelled "break-throughs") in science are incapable of identifying the really significant.

The Science, Technology and Society community believes it has an obligation to identify, highlight, and honor such science that results in technology and affects society. NASTS received the cooperation of the Federation of Materials Societies in an experiment to change the value structure of the community. It was stated that the Materials Science and Engineering field was an excellent choice to model this discovery sequence because materials are ubiquitous, more easily grasped by the public, and of obvious significance. *The Symposium presents the peer community selection of the most significant advances in materials of the last decade.*

Nominations of the best examples of "real" advances were solicited from all members of the Materials Section of the National Academy of Engineering and the presidents of the member societies of the Federation of Materials Societies. *A committee selected those advances, and the person(s) responsible, in one or another stage in the chain from discovery to marketplace to society which, in opinion of the nation's leading material scientists and engineers, represented the most significant advances made by their community in the last decade.*

Sixteen inventors or teams of inventors and developers received the gold ribbon award in the following five field of Materials Science and Technology: Ceramics, Composites, Electronic/Photonic Materials, Metals, and Polymers. The main scope of this review is to report on two gold ribbon presentations covering the most significant advances in Polymer Science. Considering, however, the relevance of this symposium for the technical community we include also brief summaries of the selected technologies of other four fields of materials science.

Dusan C. Prevorsek  
January 5, 1995