



# The Clay Minerals Society

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## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



In my previous President's Corner, I discussed the impact that the current COVID-19 pandemic has had on the organization of scientific meetings. Meetings are one of the most important tools scientific societies have 1) to encourage the advancement of science, 2) to promote research, and 3) to increase and diffuse knowledge. The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on these three goals not only

by significantly increasing the difficulty in organizing conferences and meetings but in the more pervasive way of hampering our everyday activities: worldwide, laboratories are running at a reduced pace, projects are being delayed, and teaching the next semester is now clouded with many unknowns. Scientific societies are, thus, facing new challenges, and they will have to reinvent themselves by adapting, developing, and diversifying their activities to fulfill their objectives. Some of the issues that our scientific communities face are obviously beyond our capacity of action: lockdown and the often-severe travel restrictions for foreign students and collaborators between countries, or even within a single country. On the other hand, the present situation could be a great opportunity for learned societies to be creative in developing new ways to fulfill their goals. In particular, this can be through the development of electronic communication, webinars, on-line courses, and, more generally, having on-line activities, which are minimally impacted by the pandemic. Such on-line communication is now widely available worldwide. Letting their audience know about their activities should remain part of a society's communication line, but this communication should also contribute more actively to the increase and diffusion of knowledge. Tremendous efforts have been developed by devoted university teachers to keep their classes going. Societies can probably try to capitalize on these to organize and propose a series of classes, tutorials, and practicals that would benefit the geological community in its broadest sense.

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## 2020 CMS PROFESSIONAL AWARD RECIPIENT SPOTLIGHT



Prof. **Eduardo Ruiz-Hitzky** received the 2020 Marilyn and Sturges W. Bailey Distinguished Member Award. At the 2020 CMS meeting, Prof. Ruiz-Hitzky will present a plenary talk titled, "Clay-Based Bionanocomposites For Health And Environmental Applications".

Eduardo Ruiz-Hitzky is Ad Honorem Research Professor at the Materials Science Institute of Madrid (ICMM), which is part of the National Research Council of Spain (CSIC). He is the founder and first director of several departments at this institution, including the New Architectures in Materials Chemistry Department which he created in 2010.

Prof. Ruiz-Hitzky earned his primary degree in chemistry at the Universidad Complutense, Madrid (Spain) in 1970; his Docteur en Sciences at the Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium) in 1974, supervised by Professor José J. Fripiat; and his PhD in chemistry at the Universidad Complutense, Madrid, in 1979, supervised by Professor José M. Serratosa. In 1976, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Kiel (Germany), supervised by Professor G. Lagaly<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> His three supervisors (J.J. Fripiat, J.M. Serratosa and G. Lagaly) have also each been recognized with a Marilyn and Sturges W. Bailey Distinguished Member Award.

His appointments have included that of tenure scientist at the CSIC Soil Science Institute (1975–1985) and senior research scientist at the CSIC Physical Chemistry of Minerals Institute (1985–1988). Since 1988, he has worked as a research professor, contributing to the creation of the prestigious Materials Science Institute of Madrid, and has served as a member of the Direction Committee for that institution for several decades.

Prof. Ruiz-Hitzky dedicated his research life to the study of clays, clay minerals, and related solids. He is the most cited scientist on sepiolite. He has supervised around 20 PhD theses; has authored more than 300 publications, including in high impact journals such as *Nature*; and filed around 20 patents, some of which were transferred to industry. His publications have received more than 10,000 citations (h-index > 50).

Prof. Ruiz-Hitzky served as President of the Spanish Clay Society (SEA) and has been General Chair for several international conferences, including the CMS(USA)–CSSJ(Japan)–SEA(Spain) Trilateral Meeting on Clays, which was held in Madrid and Sevilla in 2010. He was Invited Professor at the Université de Paris-Sud (Orsay) in 1987 and at the Collège de France, Paris, in 2011; Senior Fellow at the National Laboratory of Nanotechnology, Campinas (Brazil) in 2015; Invited Professor at Waseda University, Tokyo (Japan) in 2012 and 2014; and was Invited Lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge (USA) in 2017.

Prof. Ruiz-Hitzky is an Honorary Member of the SEA (2019). He has also received awards from the Académie Royale de Belgique (Brussels) in 1976, the Ministry of Sugar (Havana, Cuba) in 1995, and the National Academy of Sciences (Havana) in 2008 and 2017. He was awarded the Budé Medal by the Collège de France (Paris) in 2011 and the AIPEA Medal (at a meeting in Tokyo, Japan) in 2005.

## STUDENT RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT



Congratulations to **Adrian Broz** (University of Oregon, USA) for winning a 2020 CMS Student Research Grant!

Adrian's research is focused on **the influence of clay mineralogy on the preservation of organic matter in Mars-analog paleosols**.

This research examines the abundance and types of organic compounds preserved over geologic timescales in phyllosilicate-rich surface paleoenvironments from eastern Oregon and Australia with the goal of prioritizing locations for biosignature investigations on the surface of Mars.

ments from eastern Oregon and Australia with the goal of prioritizing locations for biosignature investigations on the surface of Mars.

## ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAVEL GRANT AWARDS FOR 2020

In the August issue of *Elements*, we listed the 2020 CMS research and travel grant recipients. Additional funding became available when the 2020 CMS annual meeting went virtual. This provided more support for research and travel grants.

Recipients of additional 2020 CMS Research Grants are Huseyin Demir (University of Georgia, USA); Rachel Havranek (University of Colorado, USA); Julia McIntosh (Southern Methodist University, Texas, USA); Mohammad Sagar (Purdue University, Indiana, USA); Kelly Tingle (University of California–Santa Barbara, USA); and Chaoqun Zhang (Chinese Academy of Sciences, China).

Recipients of additional 2020 CMS Travel Grants, to be used to pay for CMS meeting registration, are Saba Akbar (Texas A&M University, USA); Huseyin Demir (University of Georgia, USA); Ahmad Khan, (Texas A&M University); Paulina Maziarz (AGH University of Science and Technology, Poland); Jackson Nikoh (Chinese Academy of Sciences); and Ahmed Radwan (Sohag University, Egypt).