



The Clay Minerals Society

www.clays.org

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



It has been an honor and a humbling experience to serve as your president over the past year. I have been fortunate to work alongside a dedicated and talented community of colleagues and students who study the tiniest natural particles—materials we can manipulate in laboratories and factories, yet which have shaped our planet for billions of years.

Clay science is on an exciting trajectory. We continue to uncover new fundamental structural, spectroscopic, morphological, chemical, and physical properties. We are witnessing expanding applications of clays in medicine, environmental remediation, engineering, space exploration, and energy storage. We are also developing new methods and tools that allow us to study these remarkable materials in unprecedented ways. Clays existed long before humans appeared on Earth, and they will remain long after we are gone. They have served civilizations since their earliest days, and they will continue to do so—especially as new applications emerge to meet the needs of our evolving society. Collectively, we discover new properties and new uses year after year, generation after generation.

Every member contributes to the success of CMS in one way or another. Many of you volunteer your time and expertise on committees, advocacy groups, and social media. I hope you will continue to bring your enthusiasm and dedication to clay science and to CMS. I am especially encouraged to see the next generation of clay scientists stepping forward, leading research, advancing education, developing new products, and engaging with the public. Our society is adapting to the digital and AI era, and your leadership is essential in guiding that transition.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Executive Committee and to our Society Manager, Mary Gray, for their support, prompt responses, thoughtful comments, and guidance in day-to-day operations of CMS, long-range planning, and in addressing inquiries and issues raised by members, stakeholders, and peer societies. I have witnessed the selfless contributions of our members in organizing annual meetings, serving on committees, editing and reviewing manuscripts for our journal *Clays and Clay Minerals*, engaging with the public, and collaborating with other scientific organizations. Our councils and committees have provided invaluable advice on finance, policies, award nominations, contributions, grants, nomenclature, program development, communications, source clay management, and the Reynolds Cup competition. Your efforts have made the healthy growth of our society possible.

I am confident that CMS will remain strong and forward-looking. After the 2026 annual meeting in Provo, Utah, our current Vice President, Dr. Yuji Arai, will assume the presidency, and our Vice President–Elect, Dr. Janice Bishop, will step into the vice-presidential role. I invite all members to join me in welcoming them and offering our full support as they guide our society to new heights, broaden our research frontiers, and advance our discipline.

I also encourage you to continue your service—volunteer your time and expertise, help expand our membership, and mentor students, early-career researchers, faculty, and entrepreneurs. Our collective efforts will shape the future of clay science. I look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting.

Warm regards,

Youjun Deng, CMS President

CMS PROFESSIONAL AWARDS 2026

Congratulations to all the 2026 Clay Minerals Society Professional Awardees. **Yunfei Xi** of Guangzhou Institute of Geochemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences is the recipient of the CMS Marion L. and Chrystie M. Jackson Mid-Career Clay Scientist Award. **Michael Velbel** of Michigan State University (USA) is the recipient of the CMS Marilyn and Sturges W. Bailey Distinguished Member Award. **W. Crawford Elliott** of the Department of Geosciences, Georgia State University (USA) is the recipient of the CMS George W. Brindley Lecture Award. **Karolina Rybka** of the Institute of Geological Sciences, Polish Academy of Sciences (Poland) is the recipient of the CMS Warren Huff Clay Science Pathway Award. We will continue to publish detailed biographies of all awardees in our *Elements* news corner.

Yunfei Xi



Dr. Yunfei Xi received the 2026 Marion L. and Chrystie M. Jackson Mid-Career Clay Scientist Award. He is recognized for his significant contributions to clay mineral science, particularly in advancing the fundamental understanding and applications of clay minerals as catalysts, adsorbents, and components in mineral-based materials for environmental remediation and industrial innovation. Dr. Xi is a professor at the Guangzhou Institute of Geochemistry, Chinese Academy of

Sciences, and serves as the Director of the State Key Laboratory of Advanced Environmental Technology. He is also an adjunct professor at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT, Australia). He received his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Tianjin University (China), his master's degree in chemistry from Nankai University (China), and his PhD in materials chemistry from QUT.

Dr. Xi's research spans environmental mineralogy and industrial applications, with impacts in both academia and industry. He has collaborated with multiple companies to translate fundamental clay mineral science into practical technologies. Notably, his work with Brickworks Ltd., an international building materials company with manufacturing operations in Australia and the United States, has contributed to low-carbon, high-strength brick products and other sustainable mineral-based materials.

He has been recognized with several honors, including the Inaugural Australian Research Council Mid-Career Industry Fellowship and the Advance Queensland Mid-Career Fellowship. Dr. Xi serves as an editor or editorial board member for several international journals, including *Clays and Clay Minerals*, and has served as a committee member of the CMS Program Development Committee. He is deeply committed to advancing both the fundamental science and practical applications of clay minerals to address environmental and industrial challenges.

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Join us with new types of membership! Please visit www.clays.org or contact the Business Office at cms@clays.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CMS OFFICES

- We are pleased to invite you to visit our newly designed website. We hope it will be more interactive and easier to navigate. Take a look: <https://clays.org/>
- The CMS election ballot is now open and will close on **July 1st at 12:00 midnight (EST)**. All CMS members should have received an email with the voting link and instructions.