The Clay Minerals Society

www.clays.org

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear CMS community,

It is a great honor to serve as the new President of The Clay Minerals Society (CMS). I extend my sincere gratitude to our past presidents for their outstanding dedication and leadership. Their commitment to addressing the Society's challenges and fostering stronger engagement with our international colleagues has established a solid foundation for the continued growth and success of CMS.

Since the establishment of CMS in 1962, the Society has hosted conferences in numerous cities across many countries around the world. Many of you recently participated in the 63rd Annual Meeting of CMS at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, USA. We sincerely thank you for your contributions, participation, and continued interest in the Society.

In 2027, CMS will participate in the CLAY 2027 Conference, organized by AIPEA and the Spanish Clay Society, to be held in Madrid, Spain, from June 20–26, 2027. The scope of clay science has expanded significantly over the years and is now deeply interwoven with a wide range of disciplines, including agricultural science, geophysics, nanomedicine, food science, environmental engineering, soil mechanics, construction engineering, nuclear chemistry, and space exploration. I encourage you to participate and/or submit session proposals and contribute to the development of this exciting international meeting. Additional information is available on the CLAY 2027 website: https://clay.aipea.org.

Even though CMS will not be an official co-sponsor of the meeting, the organizers have graciously agreed to allow us to include our plenary speakers as part of the program during the Conference. The CMS will recognize the Bailey Award, Jackson Mid-Career Award, Pioneer Lecture, and Warren Huff Pathway Award for early-career scientists. You can find nomination criteria and expectations for these awards at the CMS website (https://clays.org/awards-grants/).

Our mission is to advance clay science for the benefit of industry, the environment, and society by fostering collaboration among researchers, educators, and practitioners. For those whose work involves clay science, I encourage you to take advantage of opportunities to broaden the reach and impact of the CMS. You can contribute by organizing a session at our annual meeting, publishing your research in our society journal, *Clays and Clay Minerals*, or submitting a letter, book review, and review article.

We welcome new ideas, fresh perspectives, and new members. If you are interested in becoming involved or learning more about CMS, please contact us through The Clay Minerals Society.

Warm regards,

Yuji Arai, CMS President

CMS PROFESSIONAL AWARD 2026

Congratulations to all the 2026 Clay Minerals Society Professional Awardees! **See the full list in the June *Elements* issue.** We highlighted Yunfei Xi (Guangzhou Institute of Geochemistry, China) for his Jackson Mid-Career Clay Scientist Award. In this issue, we are pleased to showcase W. Crawford Elliott (Department of Geosciences, Georgia State University, USA) for his Brindley Lecture Award, and Karolina Rybka (Institute of Geological Sciences, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland) for her Warren Huff Clay Science Pathway Award. We will continue to publish detailed biographies of all awardees in our *Elements* Society News corner.

Crawford Elliott

W. Crawford Elliott is recognized for his contributions to the clay minerals literature throughout much of his career. Dr. Elliott's recent work has focused on the occurrences of sizeable concentrations of rare earth elements in mine waste from kaolin ore in Georgia. This work attracted considerable attention due to the potential for co-production of rare earths during kaolin mining. He has studied the kinetics of the smectite-to-illite transformation in several sedimentary basins using field studies, laboratory experiments, K-Ar geochronology, and kinetic modeling. Lastly, he and his students have studied the sorption and fixation of radiocesium by weathered muscovite and mica-vermiculite intergrades in soils. Dr. Elliott is a professor of geosciences at Georgia State University, USA, where he recently completed his 31st year of employment. He is a member of the Editorial Board of Chemical Geology and an elected Fellow of the Geological Society of America. He received his PhD and conducted postdoctoral research at Case Western Reserve University, USA, where he studied illitization in the Denver and Appalachian basins, the origin of smectite at the Cretaceous–Tertiary Boundary in Denmark, and climate proxies in Piedmont regolith. He served as President of the Clay Minerals Society in 2015.

Karolina Rybka

Karolina Rybka is currently an assistant professor at the Institute of Geological Sciences, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland. She earned her PhD in 2022 from AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków, Poland. Her doctoral research focused on anion adsorption by layered double hydroxides obtained through mineral transformation and was recognized as the Best Doctoral Thesis of 2022 by the Mineralogical Society of Poland.

Following her doctorate, her research has centered on the rehydration behaviour of smectites subjected to high temperatures—fundamental research contextualized within the application of bentonites in deep geological radioactive waste repositories.

She was awarded the prestigious START Stipend by the Foundation for Polish Science in 2024, granted annually to the 100 most outstanding researchers under 30 years old in Poland. Karolina has served as a reviewer for 10 journals and as co-guest editor of a special issue in *Applied Clay Science*. She currently serves as Chair of the Early Career Clay Scientists (ECCS) Committee of AIPEA for the 2025–2029 term.

NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS, WELCOME!

We welcome four newly elected members to the CMS family! Congratulations to Jocelyne Brendlé as Vice-president-Elect, and Bhabananda Biswas, Stephan Kaufhold and Virginie Marry as council members.