

Shakhashiri receives science communications award

The Council of Scientific Society Presidents (CSSP), an organization of leaders of 60 scientific societies representing more than 1.4 million members, has honored the 2013 ACS past president, Bassam Shakhashiri of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, for his decades of effort in promoting public understanding of science by naming him the recipient of its prestigious Carl Sagan Award for Public Understanding of Science.

Shakhashiri is the William T. Evjue Distinguished Chair for the Wisconsin Idea. His most recent effort in fostering the public understanding of science has been in leading the development of the ACS Climate Science Toolkit, <<http://www.acs.org/climatescience>>, which provides objective scientific facts about global climate change for scientists to use in their communications with the public.

“Dr. Shakhashiri has long been a staunch advocate on the importance of science and scientific literacy for all people and all ages, and has a very distinguished career in promoting science and science education internationally,” said Dr. Patricia Simmons, 2013 CSSP chair-elect. “He continues to serve as a dynamic advocate for policies that serve our society through advances in science and technology.”

The award cites Shakhashiri for “Outstanding contributions and accomplishments as a recognized magnifier of the public’s understanding of science.” Established in 1993, it was named for the late astronomer Carl Sagan, who was also the first recipient. Shakhashiri presents annually the Phyllis Brauner Memorial Lecture during National Chemistry Week at the Boston Museum of Science, and is an honorary member of NESACS.

Among the past winners of the Sagan Award are Thomas Friedman (New York Times), Bill Nye (The Science Guy), Richard Harris and Ira Flatow (NPR), Alan Alda (TV science programs), and Edward Wilson (Harvard University).



Bassam Shakhashiri performs during his annual “Once Upon a Christmas Cheery In the Lab of Shakhashiri” chemistry demonstration program in 2009.

Photo: Bryce Richter, University of Wisconsin-Madison