

UCR Alumnus Richard Schrock Awarded Chancellor's Medal

MIT professor shared the 2005 Nobel Prize in chemistry
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NEWS MEDIA CONTACT

Name: **Iqbal Pittalwala**
Tel: (951) 827-6050
E-mail: iqbal@ucr.edu



RIVERSIDE, Calif. — UC Riverside alumnus Richard Schrock, a co-recipient of the 2005 Nobel Prize in chemistry, was awarded the UCR Chancellor's Medal today in recognition of his groundbreaking research in chemistry, generous teaching and mentoring, and the honor his accomplishments have brought to his alma mater. The medal is the university's highest accolade bestowed upon an individual for exceptional achievement.

UCR Chancellor France Córdoba presented the medal to Schrock at a ceremony inaugurating the Chancellor's Distinguished Lecture Series this year. Schrock, who is Frederick G. Keyes Professor of Chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, gave the first lecture in the series today. His lecture addressed how basic chemical research led to a Nobel Prize.

"Dr. Schrock has attained the highest level of achievement in his field," Córdoba said. "UCR is pleased to recognize him for his lasting contributions to chemistry, and for the prestige he has brought to our campus as a notable alumnus. He serves as an inspiration to both our faculty and students."

Schrock, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in chemistry from UCR in 1967, shared the Nobel Prize with Yves Chauvin of the Institut Français du Pétrole and Robert H. Grubbs of Caltech for the development of the metathesis method — a chemical reaction used daily in the chemical, biotechnology and food industries.

Metathesis means "change position." In metathesis reactions, molecules exchange carbon atom groups under the influence of a catalyst, which is a molecule that increases the rate of a chemical reaction. The catalyst facilitates the exchange of groups of double-bonded carbon atoms in a manner akin to the way a dance instructor might facilitate the swap of dance partners. Schrock invented metal catalysts for the metathesis reaction.

"Metathesis, an important reaction in chemistry, has received the attention it deserves because of Richard's work," said Chris Reed, Distinguished Professor of Chemistry at UCR. "It is the chemical equivalent of interchanging the ends of two sawhorses, say, a red one and a green one, by sawing them in half and re-joining them to give sawhorses with two green legs at one end and two red legs at the other. The process is so clean and efficient that many chemicals — drugs, plastics, food additives, etc. — can be made more cheaply and more cleanly. This is an example of basic research turning into something that is good for humankind, which is what Alfred Nobel had in mind when he created the Nobel Prize."

Having become interested in chemistry at the age of eight when his brother gave him a chemistry set, Schrock, 61, began serious scientific work as a UCR undergraduate, engaging himself in physical chemistry. He then went to Harvard University, where he received his Ph.D. in 1971. He spent a year as a National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellow at Cambridge University followed by three years at the Central Research and Development Department of E.I. duPont de Nemours and Co. before joining the MIT faculty in 1975.

A member of the National Academy of Sciences as well as the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Schrock has published more



Richard Schrock, a co-recipient of the 2005 Nobel Prize in chemistry and the Frederick G. Keyes Professor of Chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is the recipient of the UCR Chancellor's Medal. Schrock graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in chemistry from UCR in 1967. Photo credit: Donna Coveney/MIT. (For an alternate photo, scroll down to the end of release.)

than 400 research papers. He has mentored more than 150 Ph.D. and postdoctoral scholars during his more than three decades at MIT, and was associate editor of *Organometallics* for eight years.

While at MIT, Schrock was a Camille and Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar (1978-1983) and a recipient of an Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship (1976-1978). In 1996 he received the American Chemical Society Award in Inorganic Chemistry for his efforts to develop cleaner and more efficient ways to manufacture chemicals. In addition, he has received the ACS Award in Organometallic Chemistry (1985), the Harrison Howe Award of the Rochester ACS section (1990), an Alexander von Humboldt Award (1995), the Bailar Medal from the University of Illinois (1998), an ACS Cope Scholar Award (2001) and the Sir Geoffrey Wilkinson Medal (2002).

At UCR, Schrock continues to be a positive presence through relationships with colleagues, particularly in the Department of Chemistry, where he was the 2003 Bryan Kohler Memorial Lecturer.

The UCR Chancellor's Medal was first presented in 1986-1987 as the Chancellor's Founders Medal at the Founders Day ceremony. Following 1991-92, the award became the Chancellor's Medal, given to individuals in recognition of outstanding contribution to the well-being of others. Through the medal, regarded as evidence of genuine eminent distinction, UCR acknowledges its highest ideals in recognizing personal accomplishments.

The recipient of the UCR Chancellor's Medal can be an individual from any field of endeavor, but usually with a past close association with UCR. The recipient's achievements, contributions or services should have made an extraordinary contribution to the betterment of UCR and/or to society.

Sponsored by the Office of the Chancellor, the Chancellor's Distinguished Lecture Series is an annual event featuring personalities from the letters, the sciences, the arts and other sectors of society. It was conceived to stimulate the region's intellectual community, to inspire students to think beyond the lecture hall and laboratory, and to involve members of the community in the academic life of the UCR campus. The theme this year is "Beyond Boundaries: Explorations and Experimentation in Science, Art, and Statecraft."

Other scheduled speakers are former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins on March 14 and The Honorable Joseph Ghougassian, Ph.D., J.D., former Ambassador of the United States to the State of Qatar, on April 18. All the lectures in the Chancellor's Distinguished Lecture Series are free and open to the public, and held in the University Theatre. A reception on the patio follows each lecture.



The UCR Chancellor's Medal is the University of California, Riverside's highest accolade bestowed upon an individual for exceptional achievement.



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ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

- [RSVP for Schrock lecture: 951-827-3144](#)

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