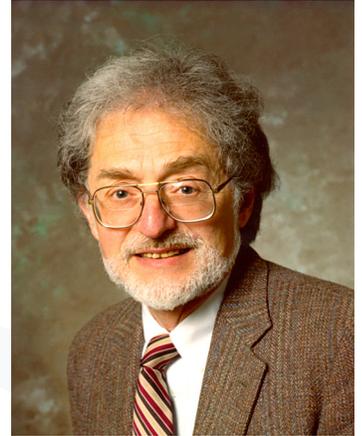


## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Eugene Commins Named First AAPT J.D. Jackson Excellence in Graduate Education Awardee

College Park, Maryland, United States, October 29, 2009—The American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) announced today that the first AAPT J. D. Jackson Excellence in Graduate Education Award winner is Eugene Commins, physics professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley. This award is given in recognition of contributions to graduate physics education and awardees are chosen for their extraordinary accomplishments in communicating the excitement of physics to their students.



This prestigious award will be presented to Commins at a Ceremonial Session of the AAPT Winter Meeting at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, DC, on Monday, February 15, 2010.

Warren Hein, AAPT Executive Officer noted, "It is a great honor to recognize an educator with such a distinguished career as the first recipient of the J. D. Jackson Award. Dr. Commins sets the standard for graduate physics around the world."

Commins earned his BA with Honors in Mathematics and Physics at Swarthmore College and his Ph.D. in Physics at Columbia University, New York, N.Y. He began his teaching career at Columbia University before moving to the University of California Berkeley in 1960.

Frances Hellman, Chair of the Department of Physics at University of California, Berkeley said, "Eugene has been one of the pillars of the Berkeley Physics department for several decades. Over this period, he has taught and educated generations of physicists, many of whom have gone on to sterling careers in their own right: our current Energy Secretary, Nobel Laureate Steve Chu, is an outstanding example of a student who was taught and mentored by Eugene! But, by far, the biggest impact that Eugene has had is on the broad spectrum of graduate students from across the country and around the world."

Lila Adair, Awards Committee Chair, said that there were several reasons Commins was selected. "His nomination recognizes Eugene as a superb and dedicated teacher whose scientific brilliance is complemented by a great work ethic and dedication to the profession of teaching. His students are exuberant in their praise for his lectures, lecture notes, and concern for the students. He is an example of a great mentor. Many extremely distinguished scientists took classes from him, got their PhD's working with him, and speak passionately about him to their colleagues."

This award recognizes that great teaching CAN be done and should be expected of great scientists at leading institutions, not only from people whose primary or entire focus is on teaching.

Regarding his recognition as recipient of the First J.D. Jackson Excellence in Graduate Education Award, Commins said, "I am very grateful and honored to receive the J.D. Jackson Award, all the more so because it bears the name of a most highly esteemed friend and colleague, J.D. Jackson. He is a truly distinguished

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scholar and teacher, and if his name were not on the award, he would be first on my list of those who deserve to receive it.”

### **About the Award**

Named in honor of outstanding physicist and teacher, J. D. Jackson, this award recognizes physicists and physics educators who, like John David Jackson, have made outstanding contributions to curriculum development, mentorship, or classroom teaching in graduate physics education.

### **About AAPT**

AAPT is an international organization for physics educators, physicists, and industrial scientists—with more than 10,000 members worldwide. Dedicated to enhancing the understanding and appreciation of physics through teaching, AAPT provides awards, publications, and programs that encourage practical application of physics principles, support continuing professional development, and reward excellence in physics education. AAPT was founded in 1930 and is headquartered in the American Center for Physics in College Park, Maryland.

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