



# American Association of Physics Teachers

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Mary Beth Monroe Recognized for Creative Leadership in Physics Education**

College Park, Maryland, United States, October 29, 2009 —The American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) announced today that The Melba Newell Phillips Medal has been awarded to Mary Beth Monroe, Professor of Physics at Southwest Texas Junior College, in recognition of her creative leadership and dedicated service that have resulted in exceptional contributions within AAPT.



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

Lila Adair, Chairman, AAPT Awards Committee, said, “Mary Beth is an amazing lady. She has dedicated her entire career to sharing her passion for physics and AAPT with her students, colleagues and fellow AAPT members. She is one of the few experts I turn to for the institutional history of AAPT, and I am so proud to be presenting the Phillips Medal to her.”

As a long time AAPT member, Monroe has quietly and tenaciously served the organization at the state and national level for more than three decades. She served as AAPT Secretary and Chair of the Publications Committee from 2001-2007 and is currently serving as a member of the Committee on the Interests of Senior Physicists and as Chair of the Governance Review Committee. She has played a leading role in developing networks among physicists teaching in Two Year Colleges that have led both to their increasing involvement in AAPT and to better teaching for the students who study physics in these schools

“The Melba Newell Phillips Medal is AAPT’s highest recognition for member leadership and service. Mary Beth personifies these qualities through her continuing role as a leader in our organization and in the Two Year College community,” stated Warren Hein, AAPT’s Executive Officer.

Monroe received her B.S. degree in physics from Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX, and her M.S. in Physics (research field, plasma physics) with a double minor in Junior College Teaching (HEW intern) and Math, 1973. She is a dedicated proponent of quality physics education in Two Year and Community Colleges. She served on the AAPT Executive Board as Member-at-Large Representing Two Year Colleges and as a member of the Committee on Physics in the Two Year College. Additionally, she served as Principal Investigator and Project Director for TYC21 and as Co Principal Investigator for Strategic Programs for Innovations in Undergraduate Physics at Two Year Colleges from 2002-2005.

Regarding the award, Monroe stated, “I was stunned when I received word from the AAPT Awards Committee that I had been selected to receive the esteemed Melba Newell

Phillips Medal! Melba was responsible for me attending my first AAPT national meeting in 1977 and she used her influence to help place me on some AAPT committees in my first years with the Association. She impressed upon me that I had a responsibility not only to my students, but also beyond my classroom to the physics education community. The AAPT has provided me ample opportunities to fulfill both. Therefore this award, which embodies the ideals that Melba had for physics education and AAPT, has a special significance for me. I am honored and humbled by this recognition.”

### **About the Award**

The Melba Newell Phillips Medal honors Melba Phillips for her leadership and dedicated service to physics education. She was the first woman President of the AAPT and a founder of the Federation of American Scientists. Professor Phillips’ research was in nuclear physics, and she served on the faculty of Brooklyn College and the University of Chicago.

*more . . .*

*Strengthening Physics Education. Supporting Physics Teachers.*

She was a champion of physics education throughout her life. This Award is given only occasionally to subsequent AAPT leaders who display similar achievements and exceptional contributions. The first recipient of the Award was Melba Phillips herself (Emeritus, University of Chicago), in January 1982.

The previous medal recipients include Clifford Swartz, Judy R. Franz, Robert B. Clark, H. Richard Crane, and E. Leonard Jossem. The complete list of winners can be found at <http://www.aapt.org/Grants/phillips.cfm>.

#### **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.

For more information: Contact Marilyn Gardner, Director of Communications, [mgardner@aapt.org](mailto:mgardner@aapt.org), (301)209-3306, (301)209-0845 (Fax), [www.aapt.org](http://www.aapt.org).