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ECU Physics Professor Receives Prestigious Helms Award

GREENVILLE, N.C. (April 21, 2015) — East Carolina University professor of physics Dr. Gregory Lapicki recently received a prestigious award. On Friday, April 17, he was honored at an awards dinner, where he was announced as the 2015 Helms Faculty Award recipient from the ECU chapter of Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society.

Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society, is one of the oldest and largest scientific organizations in the world. According to their website, Sigma Xi has had a distinguished history of service to science and society for more than 125 years. Scientists and engineers, whose research spans the disciplines of science and technology, comprise the membership of the Society.

The ECU Chapter of Sigma Xi was chartered in 1974. R. Marshall Helms established the Helms Faculty Research award, given by the ECU Chapter, in 1987, honoring three members of his family who were involved in research and teaching at ECU. Helms was a member of the physics department at ECU from 1948 until his retirement in 1972, and he presented his last seminar to the department in 2001 at the age of 93. The Helms award focuses largely on the impact that a single publication has on the research discipline, and cycles in successive years between biological sciences, medical/social sciences, and mathematics and physical sciences.

Lapicki received the honor for a paper he coauthored with fellow colleague Javier Miranda titled, “Experimental Cross Sections for L-shell X-ray Production and Ionization by Protons.” This work helps understand, at a very fundamental level, the reactions that occur in a person undergoing proton therapy, usually associated with treatment for certain types of cancer.

“The award validates the worth of our research,” said Lapicki. “In this case, through my fruitful collaboration with Javier Miranda from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.”

Lapicki began teaching at ECU in 1981, and in recent years he has taught courses in general physics, classical mechanics, electricity and magnetism, and undergraduate and graduate methods of mathematical physics.

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