

Press release

For immediate release

HKU Astrophysicist Professor Quentin Parker and His Collaborators Awarded the 2022 Gemini Prize

June 1, 2022

Professor Quentin A PARKER, Director of the Laboratory for Space Research (LSR) at The University of Hong Kong, together with his collaborator, Pascal Le Dû, amateur astronomer and 2SPOT association President, as well as amateur astronomers and members of the 2SPOT association Thomas Petit, Lionel Mulato and Olivier Garde, are awarded Le Prix Gemini 2022 (the 2022 Gemini Prize) co-organised by La Société astronomique de France (SAF) and Société Française d'Astronomie et d'Astrophysique (SF2A), for their project 'Search for and Confirmation of Planetary Nebulae Candidates'.

'I feel honoured and humbled to receive this international recognition of the importance of our professional astronomical work with our French amateur colleagues in the discovery and confirmation of a significant new sample of Galactic Planetary Nebulae (the beautiful glowing shrouds of low mass dying stars). This "prix Gemini" is a fitting reward for the more than a decade of work of many of my close French amateur colleagues, led by Pascal Le Dû, in this incredible pro-am endeavour of scientific discovery, and I am proud to have played a role in their great pursuit,' said Professor Parker.

The prize (medal, diploma and cash award), which is set up to reward outstanding collaboration between professionals and amateurs in astronomy and related sciences, will be delivered during the SF2A Symposium to be held in Besancon, France, on June 10, 2022. A talk will be given by the awardees during the Gemini Pro-Am workshop on the same day. The project also has an opportunity to publish a paper in a coming issue of L'Astronomie magazine, an edition of Société astronomique de France, by the year end of 2022.

About the Project

This prestigious award results from an intensive and coordinated ten-year observational pro-am program designed to uncover and confirm Galactic Planetary Nebulae (PNe). This has been undertaken by a dedicated group of largely French amateur astronomers led by Pascal Le Dû in collaboration with professional colleagues led by Professor Quentin Parker. This group has so far uncovered 209 spectroscopically confirmed Galactic PNe. These discoveries represent ~5% of all 3831 Galactic PNe currently known according to the HASH (Hong Kong AAO Strasbourg H-alpha Planetary Nebula) PNe database. This award recognises the power and value of the amateur community in undertaking a coordinated and focused program such as this with their professional counterparts.

About Professor Quentin Parker and Laboratory for Space Research

Quentin Parker joined The University of Hong Kong in 2015 and is currently Director of the Laboratory for Space Research (LSR, see <https://www.lsr.hku.hk>). Research activities are mainly associated with Wide Field Astronomy, and he has discovered more Planetary Nebulae (PNe) than anyone in history. He has also extensive experience as an astrophysics instrumentalist and has published 571 papers/articles, of which 278 are refereed. These have more than 23475 citations with a h-index of 71. Quentin also has a long-term interest in Chinese Bronze artefacts and cultural heritage, interdisciplinary studies and science pedagogy. More recently, Quentin has been engaged in promoting STEM education from a Space and entrepreneurial direction (see <https://cubesat.hku.hk>) and is currently Vice Chairman of OASA – the Orion Astropreneur Space Academy (<https://www.oasahk.org>). He is also an active newspaper opinion piece contributor.

For media enquiries, please contact Ms Casey To, External Relations Officer (tel: 3917 4948; email: caseyto@hku.hk) / Ms Cindy Chan, Assistant Director of Communications of HKU, Faculty of Science (tel: 3917 5286; email: cindycst@hku.hk).

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Image 1: Professor Quentin Parker, Director of the Laboratory for Space Research (LSR) at The University of Hong Kong and one of the co-winners of the 2022 Gemini Prize.