



Press Release

Professor Vivian Yam becomes the first Asian and Chinese recipient of the Bailar Medal for her contributions to the field of inorganic chemistry

May 15, 2023



Professor Vivian YAM, Philip Wong Wilson Wong Professorship in Chemistry and Energy

Professor Vivian YAM, who holds the Philip Wong Wilson Wong Professorship in Chemistry and Energy at The University of Hong Kong (HKU), has been named the recipient of the 2023-24 Bailar Medal by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The prestigious award recognises Professor Yam's exceptional contributions to the fields of inorganic and coordination chemistry. As part of the award, Professor Yam has been invited by the selection committee to deliver two lectures on April 24 and 25 at UIUC, as is customary for the Bailar Medal.

Professor Yam received the award for her outstanding contributions to the rational design and synthesis of new luminescent metal complexes, as well as her achievements in fundamental research in inorganic and coordination chemistry. She is the first Asian scientist to receive the Bailar Medal, which recognises excellence in the field of inorganic chemistry.



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"I am humbled and honoured to be the first Asian inorganic chemist to be awarded the Bailar Medal that has a long history of over 50 years, and to be following the footsteps of giants in the field of inorganic and coordination chemistry. I wish to thank the University of Hong Kong for the support and encouragement throughout the years," said Professor Yam.

Established in 1972, the Bailar Medal, named in honour of Professor John Christian Bailar, Jr., known as the father of American coordination chemistry and former faculty member at the University of Illinois, is a highly prestigious award that recognises outstanding contributions to inorganic chemistry research. For over half a century, this prestigious award has been presented to chemists who have made outstanding contributions to the fields of inorganic and coordination chemistry globally. In the past, all 48 recipients of the Bailar Medal have been mainly from Europe and the United States, including four Nobel laureates in Chemistry: Henry Taube (1983 Nobel laureate in Chemistry), Jean-Marie Lehn (1987), Robert H. Grubbs (2005), and Richard R. Schrock (2015). Other Bailar Medalists include Professors Fred Basolo (Northwestern University), Richard Holm (MIT; Harvard), Malcolm L. H. Green (Oxford University), Harry B. Gray (California Institute of Technology), Jack Halpern (University of Chicago), Stephen J. Lippard (MIT), F. Albert Cotton (Texas A&M), Michael Grätzel (Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne), Jacqueline K. Barton (California Institute of Technology), Omar Yaghi (University of California, Berkeley), etc. Professor Vivian Yam is the first Asian and Chinese scholar to receive this award.

During her visit to the United States, Professor Yam gave two Bailar Medal lectures at UIUC, with the titles "From Simple Discrete Metal-Ligand Motifs to Supramolecular Assembly, Nanostructures and Morphologies" and "From Fundamentals to Molecular Design for Energy, Materials and Biomedical Applications". She was honoured with an invitation from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) to deliver a Dow Lecture in Organometallic Chemistry on April 21, titled "Harnessing of Excited States Through Molecular Design – From Discrete Metal-Ligand Chromophores to Supramolecular Assembly and Functions".

Professor Vivian Yam's biography

Vivian W W Yam is currently the Philip Wong Wilson Wong Professor in Chemistry and Energy and Chair Professor at The University of Hong Kong (HKU). She obtained her BSc (First Class Hons) in 1985 and PhD in 1988 both from HKU. After two years on the faculty of City Polytechnic of HK (now CityU), she joined her *alma mater* in 1990, rising through the academic rank of Senior Lecturer, Reader (Professor), and was appointed Chair Professor in 1999. She was elected to Member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in 2001 at the age of 38 as the youngest member of the Academy, Foreign Associate of US National Academy of Sciences, Fellow of TWAS, Foreign Member of Academia Europaea and Founding Member of Hong Kong Academy of Sciences. She is the Laureate of 2011 L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Award. She has received a number of awards, including Josef Michl ACS Award in Photochemistry, Porter Medal, RSC Centenary Medal, RSC Ludwig Mond Award, Inter-American Photochemical Society (I-APS) Presidential Award, Japanese Photochemistry Association (JPA) Honda-Fujishima Lectureship Award, JPA Eikohsha Award, Japan Society of Coordination Chemistry (JSCC) International Award, State Natural Science Award, Fulbright Distinguished Scholar, Croucher Senior Research Fellowship, etc.



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Professor Yam currently serves as the Chief Editor for Chemistry of *Natural Sciences*, a flagship open science journal of Wiley. She was an Associate Editor of *Inorganic Chemistry* of ACS for 12 years (2008-2020). She also serves as Member of International Editorial Advisory Boards of *JACS*, *Angew. Chem.*, *Chem. Sci.*, *Chem*, *Chem. Rev.*, *Acc. Chem. Res.*, *ACS Nano*, *ACS Mater. Lett.*, *Adv. Funct. Mater.*, *Mater. Horiz.*, *CCS Chemistry*, etc. She is currently the President of International Organization for Chemical Sciences in Development (IOCD) founded at UNESCO in 1981 by inaugural President Glenn Seaborg. She also serves as Vice President of Chinese Chemical Society (CCS), Chair of CCS Women Chemists Committee, and was President of Asian & Oceanian Photochemistry Association (APA). She has published over 590 journal articles. Her research interests include inorganic and organometallic chemistry, supramolecular chemistry, photophysics and photochemistry, and molecular functional materials for sensing, optoelectronics and energy research.

For media enquiries, please contact Ms Cindy Chan, Assistant Communications Director of Faculty of Science (Tel: 3917-5286; email: cindycst@hku.hk).

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