

## Awards and Lectures Honoring Joseph Priestley

By Tom Bresenhan, Friends of Joseph Priestley House

Since 1923 when the *Priestley Medal* was first awarded, the accomplishments of Joseph Priestley have been recognized by awards and lectures. These are listed in the table below along with year first awarded, sponsors, award criteria and recent honorees. A description of each follows the table.

### Awards and Lectures Honoring Joseph Priestley

First awarded	Name and Sponsoring Organization	Criteria	Recent Honorees
1923	<i>Priestley Medal</i> of American Chemical Society	Distinguished service in the field of chemistry, commemorating lifetime achievement	 Tobin J. Marks
1926	<i>Joseph Priestley Lecture</i> by Pennsylvania State University	Outstanding scientist who lectures on a subject that is border line between physical chemistry and another field	 Shankar Balasubramanian
1952	<i>Joseph Priestley Award</i> by Science Departments Dickinson College	Distinguished scientist whose work has contributed to the welfare of humanity	 Richard Alley
1995	<i>Joseph Priestley Lecture</i> by Anesthesiology Dept., Penn State Hershey Medical Cen.	Pre-eminent anesthesiologist	 Emery N. Brown
2002	<i>Joseph Priestley Service Award</i> by Susquehanna Valley Section of American Chemical Society	Outstanding community involvement and outreach activities within section membership	 Geneive E. Henry
2002	<i>The Priestley Prize for Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching in Chemistry</i> By Chemistry Department, Pennsylvania State University	Measured by the increase in learning and enthusiasm for the subject by the students in chemistry courses	 Edward P. O'Brien

Compiled by author from online sources.

### Priestley Medal from the American Chemical Society

The *Priestley Medal* is the highest honor conferred by the American Chemical Society (ACS) and is awarded for distinguished service in the field of chemistry. The award consists of a gold medallion designed to commemorate the work of Joseph Priestley. A replica of the Priestley Medal is on display at Priestley House.

The 2017 winner of the Priestley Medal is Tobin J. Marks of Northwestern University. He is the Charles E. and Emma H. Morrison Professor of Chemistry, Professor of Materials Science & Engineering, and the Vladimir N. Ipatieff Professor of Catalytic Chemistry.

**Priestley Lectures at Penn State University**

The *Priestley Lectures* were established in 1926 by Professor Wheeler P. Davey (1886-1959). The lecture series may be related to another event in 1926 when the University dedicated the Priestley Museum (now known as the Pond Building) near Priestley House in Northumberland, PA. The lecture series annually presents an outstanding scientist who speaks on a subject that is border line between physical chemistry and another field.

The 2017 lecture was delivered by Sir Shankar Balasubramanian, Herchel Smith Professor of Medicinal Chemistry at the University of Cambridge and senior group leader at the Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute. The recipient also delivers the Robert T. Simpson Lecture.

**The Joseph Priestley Award by Dickinson College**

The *Joseph Priestley Award* is presented to a distinguished scientist whose work has contributed to the welfare of humanity. The first award was presented in 1952. During the celebration, the college displays its collection of Priestley apparatus and memorabilia. The recipient receives a ceramic medallion of Priestley struck from an original 1779 mold by Josiah Wedgwood. The event is supported by the College's Priestley Fund and is sponsored by the Clarke Forum for Contemporary Issues and co-sponsored by the departments of biology, chemistry, earth sciences, environmental studies, mathematics & computer science, psychology, and physics & astronomy. The recipient is chosen by a different science department each year.

The 2017 winner is Dr. Richard Alley, the Evan Pugh Professor of Geosciences and an Associate of the Earth and Environmental Systems Institute at Penn State.

**Joseph Priestley Lecture by Dept. of Anesthesiology, Penn State Hershey Medical Center**

The annual *Joseph Priestley Lecture* series in the Department of Anesthesiology began in 1995. A pre-eminent anesthesiologist is invited to deliver a series of two lectures over two days. The first lecture is on an academic subject of choice, usually held in the departmental library. The second lecture is an after dinner address for a combined medical and lay audience, on a subject of the speaker's choice. In 2008 the Department of Anesthesiology supported an endowment, the "Joseph Priestley Lectureship in Anesthesiology," to ensure continued funding for this major academic event of the year. The department established a Joseph Priestley Scholarship in Anesthesiology that is awarded to a resident to support and nurture a career in academic anesthesia.

The 2017 speaker will be Emery Neal Brown, MD, PhD, a practicing anesthesiologist at Massachusetts General Hospital, the Warren M. Zapol Professor of Anesthesia at Harvard Medical School and the Director of the Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology Program. It is a tradition to take the speaker on a tour of the Joseph Priestley House.

**Joseph Priestley Service Award from Susquehanna Valley Section of American Chemical Society**

The *Joseph Priestley Service Award* was established in 2002 to recognize outstanding community involvement and outreach activities within section membership. The award criteria are broadly defined so both "worker-bees" as well as those in formal leadership roles are eligible.

The 2017 winner is Geneive E. Henry; Professor of Chemistry at Susquehanna University, whose primary area of research is natural product and medicinal chemistry.

**The Priestley Prize for Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching in Chemistry at Penn State**

The *Priestley Prize* is awarded annually to a faculty member in the Chemistry Department for excellence in undergraduate chemistry instruction. The winner receives a plaque and a cash prize of \$5,000. The Priestley Prize was established in 2002 to recognize the best undergraduate teachers in the Chemistry Department as measured by the increase in learning and enthusiasm for the subject by the students in chemistry courses.

The 2016 winner is Edward P. O'Brien, Assistant Professor of Chemistry and of the Institute for CyberScience. His research interest is theory and computation of molecular and cellular processes.