

Alfred University alumni organize tribute to their former professor at International Congress on Glass
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Arun Varshneya

Dr. Arun K. Varshneya, an emeritus professor of glass science at Alfred University, will be honored by his peers at the 25th International Congress on Glass June 9-14 in Boston, MA, for a lifetime of achievements in glass research, education, and entrepreneurship.

The “festschrift” in Varshneya’s honor is being organized by two of his former Alfred University students. “Our teacher has dedicated almost six decades of his life to the advancement of glass science, engineering and technology,” say the organizers Dr. Vijay Jain ’88 MS, ’87 PhD glass science, now chief technology officer at Savannah River Remediation, and Dr. John Mauro ’01 BS, ’06 PhD glass science, now professor of materials science at engineering at Penn State.

Varshneya’s contributions to the field “have had a profound impact on many facets of glass science and technology, and more importantly, on the people throughout the glass community,” according to Jain and Mauro.

As part of the festschrift, ICG will conduct a symposium in his honor, with more than 50 papers presented, and publish a book covering Varshneya’s lifetime significant scholarly works and anecdotes from friends and professional colleagues about the work he inspired others to do.

Varshneya joined the faculty in what is now the Inamori School of Engineering at Alfred University in 1982, joining a glass faculty that included five full-time professors, all of whom earned international acclaim. He had previously worked at Ford Scientific Laboratories in Dearborn, MI, and GE Lighting Business Group, Cleveland, OH., after earning his master's and PhD degrees at what is now Case Western Reserve University where he worked under advisor Dr. Alfred R. Cooper, an Alfred alumnus, class of 1948 and also a legendary glass scientist.

As a professor, Varshneya at various times taught every required course in the glass science curriculum, working primarily with junior, senior and graduate-level students. Among his most popular courses were "Introduction to Glass Science," "Industrial Glass and Glass-Ceramics," and "Glass Transition Range Behavior," a graduate-level course. He for many years taught the senior capstone course, "Engineering Operations," which included business basics for ceramics and glass manufacturing operations, paving the way for what became ABET's standard for "practical, hands-on engineering" in accreditation of US engineering schools. During his 29-year career as an active member of the faculty, prior to his retirement in 2011 and his promotion to emeritus status, Varshneya advised baccalaureate, master's and doctoral theses in a wide variety of glass engineering science areas. His work generated about 160 publications and 12 patents. Over the years, he taught several short courses on glass to participants from the industry. At a pharmaceuticals packaging meeting, after introducing himself as an Alfred University professor, he proudly claimed that, if they had any glass engineer in their employment, chances were a third that they have had some kind of formal glass training from him

"Fundamentals of Inorganic Glasses," a textbook he authored, is considered to be a seminal work in that area. He was solo author for the first two editions; the third, released earlier this month, was written with Mauro. He was also invited to author a 13-page entry on "industrial glass" for Encyclopedia Britannica. He was featured in the May-June 2019 issue of "Glass Worldwide."

His lifetime achievements have earned him several awards. He was named an honorary fellow of the Society of Glass Technology in 2018 and a Distinguished Life Member of the American Ceramic Society (ACerS) in 2014. He received the President's Award for lifetime achievement from the International Congress on Glass in 2007. He has delivered several invited award lectures for the American Ceramic Society and its Glass and Optical Materials Division, including the George Morey Award Lecture, 2018; the Toledo Glass and Ceramics Award Lecture, 2015; the Arthur L. Friedberg Award Lecture 2015; and the Alfred R. Cooper Award Lecture 2012.