



One More Accolade for the List

Lee Riedinger Elected to AAAS Fellowship

December 23, 2011

It would be simple to acknowledge the distinction as yet another award; his vita is already crowded with them. But the accolades are never the objective for Physics Professor Lee Riedinger. For him the goal has always been about building teams and finding ways to improve research and education. The awards just seem to come with the territory, as is the case with his latest honor.

In early December the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) announced its latest class of elected fellows, and there was the familiar name: Lee Riedinger, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. His citation is for "seminal studies of atomic nuclei at high spin and leadership in fostering inter-disciplinary research and graduate education collaborations between universities and Oak Ridge National Laboratory."

He is one of two UTK professors elected to AAAS fellowship this year, the other being Dr. Mike Simpson of the materials science and engineering department. Together they are the driving force behind the Bredesen Center for Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Education; Riedinger as director and Simpson as assistant director. The Bredesen Center was born simply as CIRE (the Center for Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Education) in January 2010. This past fall it was renamed to honor Tennessee's former governor, Phil Bredesen, and its goal is to offer a new, visionary form of graduate education that draws on the strengths of all scientific disciplines to address critical challenges in energy-related fields.

For Riedinger, the Bredesen Center another in a list of collaborative projects that have helped define his career. From the days when he sat around a dining room table with other physicists and envisioned the [Science Alliance](#) to helping shepherd university partnerships at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, he has always been interested in leveraging talent and resources to solve problems. Though he is now with the Bredesen Center, he is still a professor of physics and astronomy and has taught a course on Energy in the Modern World to undergraduate students in the [Haslam Scholars](#) program. Beginning January 1 he has also agreed to serve, for the third time, as the university's interim Vice-Chancellor for Research.

Despite devoting so much time to administration, Riedinger is first and foremost a nuclear physicist. He earned a bachelor's degree in 1964 from Thomas More College and completed a Ph.D. in physics at Vanderbilt University in 1968. After initial appointments at the Niels Bohr Institute and the University of Notre Dame, he joined the UTK Department of Physics and Astronomy as an assistant professor in 1971. In 1975, he and Dr. Carrol Bingham won a Department of Energy grant for \$15,000, and DOE has funded their research ever since. His area of interest is experimental nuclear physics, specifically high spin gamma-ray spectroscopy, and in February 2011 his colleagues put together a symposium entitled "Waltzing to the Nuclear Limits" to honor his career achievements.

Riedinger joins three other AAAS Fellows of the UTK Department of Physics and Astronomy: Dr. Robert Compton, Dr. Elbio Dagotto, Dr. Wittek Nazarewicz, and Dr. Soren Sorensen.



Dr. Lee Riedinger