

For Immediate Release

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In an unprecedented move, the Accredited Gemologists Association is pleased to announce *three* categories for the 2019 Antonio C. Bonanno Award for Excellence in Gemology

The Antonio C. Bonanno Award for Excellence in Gemology is an internationally respected honor conferred to people who have made important contributions in the field. This year is particularly exciting for the AGA since it is only the second time in the association's forty-five year history in which multiple recipients have been recognized in the same year.

It is with great pleasure that the AGA announces the following 2019 Antonio C. Bonanno Award Recipients:

Donna Hawrelko, *Gemmology & Jewellery Program Coordinator & Instructor at Vancouver Community College*. Donna is awarded for her significant contribution to the field of gemological education and her commitment to generations of gemology students. As a leading figure in the international gemological community, Donna has focused on developing course manuals, and materials while teaching gemology to an international student body at the Gemmology and Jewellery departments at Vancouver Community College, where she has served as instructor since 1992, and Program Coordinator since 2005. She has educated thousands of students, some of whom now hold prominent positions in the gem industry worldwide. She was instrumental in developing the Canadian Gemmological Association (CGA) program, and served as Chief Examiner, Director of Education, and later became the president of CGA in 2015. The CGA reestablished its historic alliance with Gem-A through her efforts in 2017. Donna is also past president of AGA and was an influential figure during her tenure helping to reshape the AGA into the internationally respected organization that it is today.

Alberto Scarani and Mikko Åström, *co-founders of MAGI Labs*. Scarani and Åström are recognized for adapting advanced spectroscopy technology to the gemological field, making it accessible and affordable to all gemologists. This was most notable from their Gemmoran system, a major breakthrough for gemologists and appraisers as it placed portable and reliable Raman & Photoluminescence spectroscopy capabilities at their fingertips. Prior to this, such technology and the detailed database critical to accurate results were typically only accessible through universities and major laboratories.

Dr. Karl Schmetzer, *renowned research gemologist*. Dr. Schmetzer is awarded for over 50 years dedicated to research in the mineralogical and gemological fields and sharing his discoveries globally through an astounding body of work, and for serving in leadership roles with CIBJO and other organizations to help raise professional standards for the global gem and jewelry industry yielding new discoveries and insights into these sciences. He has generously shared his findings through an unparalleled body of work, including almost 400 papers, two books, and presentations around the world. He has also served in leadership roles with CIBJO and other organizations to help raise professional standards for the global gem and jewelry industry.

This year the AGA Board was struck by the voting patterns. In analyzing the data more carefully, it was concluded that each of the nominees had made outstanding contributions, but each in their own -- *distinctly different*-- facets of the field.

In response to this, the AGA Board of Governors, in consultation with the AGA Special Advisor, Antoinette (Bonanno) Matlins, concluded that there was no better time than the present to inaugurate an expanded award format that truly reflected the many facets of the incredible field we call *gemology*!

"After all," explained AGA President Stuart Robertson, "since its inception the AGA has endeavored to recognize the people and pioneers who have made significant contributions in each of the areas in which the AGA has been active. So today, with such expanded activity in each of those areas -- Education; Gemological Research; Gemological Instrumentation; Industry Standards; and Consumer Awareness and Advocacy -- a single award is no longer sufficient to adequately reflect the current reality."

Supporting this idea, Matlins added, “During my father’s career in gemology, he was an innovator, educator, and, of course, a respected gemologist. He would be delighted that an award created in his honor is being presented this year to a talented educator and mentor; two extraordinary innovators of technology; and a world-renowned gemological researcher”!

Previous recipients of the Antonio C. Bonanno Award For Excellence in Gemology include: Dr. William “Bill” Hanneman, Al Gilbertson, Dr. Cigdem Lule, Dr. Thomas Hainschwang, Dr. John Emmett, Dr. Emmanuel Fritsch, Thom Underwood, Stuart Robertson, Richard Hughes, Christopher Smith, Dr. James Shigley, Shane McClure, Richard Drucker, Alan Jobbins, Antoinette Matlins, Dr. Henry Hanni, the late G. Robert Crowningshield, John Koivula, C. R. Beesley, and Alan Hodgkinson.

The Antonio C. Bonanno Award for Excellence in Gemology will be presented at AGA’s Gala Dinner Dance at the conclusion of its Tucson Conference, Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at the Tucson University Park Hotel. The award includes a personalized plaque and \$2000.00 honorarium funded by the AGA membership. For additional information or to attend the conference or gala, go to www.accreditedgemologists.org or call 844-288-4367.