

Acceptance of the Dana Medal of the Mineralogical Society of America for 2022

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I am truly grateful for receiving the Dana Medal, and I thank the committee, my letter writers, and the community for their support. I want to start off by thanking Roberta Rudnick, who was my Ph.D. adviser. I still can't believe she took me on as a student and then kept me on, as I was always disappearing to look for birds. But somehow it all worked out. I cannot thank her enough for teaching me how to be a scientist. But it wasn't just the science; it was also mentoring in how to just live life. I remember one morning, I was in Roberta's office trying to make a poster the old-fashioned way, and I sliced through my finger with the paper cutter. A bloody mess. Bill McDonough and others looked like they were about to faint, I was about ready to panic, but Roberta remained calm. I guess it wasn't her finger. But it was always that comforting calmness that I think helped me get through my Ph.D. I tell students when they are looking for an adviser to pick not just a great scientist but a life mentor as well because there's more to science than just writing papers.

I was born in Taiwan but came at a very young age to the U.S. My parents immigrated here to study. They both came from poor families. My father was the first in his extended family to graduate from high school. His own father, my grandfather, unjustly disappeared into prison during my father's formative years. When they were graduate students, they sent a significant fraction of their monthly stipend back home to support their parents and siblings. It was not easy for my parents to get jobs after their Ph.D., but one day, he got a response from UC Riverside that they were interested in hiring him. This was in the 1970s, during the oil crisis when geothermal energy came into vogue. My dad was a heat flow guy. He accepted the position on the spot—he was so grateful and so fearful that this would be his only chance. My mother found a job working in the civil engineering side of the city, sacrificing her academic career to take care of two kids, while my dad desperately tried to learn English better so that students wouldn't laugh when he tried to teach. Our family has forever been grateful to this country for giving us a chance.

While my parents struggled and sacrificed, they paved a smoother path for my brother and me. I struggled a lot in my formative years dealing with violent bullying and discrimination in elementary through high school, but I was fortunate to have the support of my parents and friends to not only get me through these tough times but also to open opportunities for me. I was exposed to geophysics and geology from my parents through osmosis. Close family friend Doug Morton, a USGS geologist, took me birdwatching when I was a kid, but he also would talk about geology all the time, so I was surrounded by geology since I was a kid. At Berkeley, where I did my undergrad, George Brimhall took me under his wing, and I was exposed to the fascinating world of economic geology. At Harvard, Roberta brought me into the world of xenoliths and the origin of continents. Qing-zhu Yin taught me about mass spectrometry. I then went to Caltech to work with Gerald Wasserburg



and learned a few more things. Rice University was the only place that offered me a position at the time, and I was allowed to grow, and for that I'm grateful. I've been in Texas long enough to be a Texan, I think. So I'm here today in large part because I got a head start, which opened doors, which opened more doors, etc. I didn't get here by myself. If there's anything to be gained from my story, it is that opening the doors is a good thing.

Since I've been at Rice, I've been blessed to learn from so many people. My good friend Mark Little, who is the current president of the Geological Society of America, and one of the most brilliant people I know, brought me into soils and taught me about life. I was and still am surrounded by talented students: Emily Chin, Zhengxue Li, Monica Erdman, Michael Farnier, Hehe Jiang, Lexi Malouta, Blake Dyer, Jackson Borchardt, Sydney Allen, Patrick Phelps, Julie Perez, Ulyana Horodyskyj, Eytan Sharton-Bierig to name a few, and talented post-docs: Veronique Le Roux, Ming Tang, Arnaud Agranier, Xu Chu, Duncan Keller, Bing Shen, Cailey Condit, Chenguang Sun, Ye Peng, and Min Chen, who sadly is not here with us anymore. I also had the chance to collaborate with my Rice colleagues Rajdeep Dasgupta, Melodie French, Mark Torres, Helge Gonnermann, Adrian Lenardic, Juli Morgan, Fenglin Niu, Alan Levander, Laurence Yeung, and Sylvia Dee. Other key influences are Francis Albarede, Janne Blichert-Toft, Terry Plank, Keith Putirka, Richard O'Connell, Michael Manga, and Stein Jacobsen. I've also been fortunate to have a number of geo-friends who share my passion for birds: Melani Barboni, Brad Hacker, Greg Hirth, and the late Doug Morton and John G Bolm.

It was a wonderful adventure.

Finally, I thank my wife Yu-Ye and my 7-year-old son Heru for their love and support, and my parents and brother for encouraging me to follow my interests. I don't have any profound words of wisdom to give. But my son reminds me every day that if you observe the world through the eyes of a kid, there is never a day you are bored. The Earth is an endless source of ideas and imagination as long as we take the time to look.

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