

» HIGHLIGHTS SMST FOUNDERS' GRANT

FROM THE FOUNDATION

Duerig Endows SMST Founders' Grant

One of the pioneers in the field of shape memory alloys and a founder of The International Organization on Shape Memory and Superelastic Technologies (SMST) is now giving back to help the next generation of researchers advance the industry. Thomas W. (Tom) Duerig donated \$1 million to the ASM Materials Education Foundation to endow the new SMST Founders' Grant to support young researchers.



Duerig

The intent of the grant is to provide funding for early, exploratory research related to shape memory and superelasticity. It is expected that the funds will be used as a seed grant to test a concept and lay the foundation for obtaining further funding from industry or government agencies. Over 25 applicants vied for the 2019 grant, which comes with a \$50,000 stipend. The 2019 winner will be announced at the SMST event in Konstanz, Germany, during the plenary session on May 15.

Duerig explains how he got started in this innovative industry after receiving his B.S. in physics from Lehigh University and his Ph.D. in materials science from Carnegie-Mellon University. "My interests in this field began in 1980 after accidentally discovering a shape memory effect in beta titanium alloys while working at Brown Boveri in Switzerland.

While not terribly practical as a shape memory alloy, this spurred me on to look at the beta bronzes and Nitinol."

In 1983, after relocating to the Silicon Valley, Duerig continued researching shape memory alloys with Raychem Corp. until 1991 when he founded Nitinol Development Corp., (NDC) with a focus on finding medical applications for Nitinol. After NDC was acquired by Johnson & Johnson in 1997, he continued as president until 2007. Wanting to return to his roots in materials science, he then led a management buyout of assets related to raw material production and sales. The new company, Confluent Medical Technologies, has since expanded into a broad range of medical device manufacturing technologies and now employs over 1200 people. While Duerig has retired from the day-to-day leadership of the company, he remains active both as a board member and scientist.

In 1992, Duerig, along with Alan Pelton and Darel Hodgson, founded SMST to disseminate technical information and provide education on these unique materials, as well as to promote their use in new applications.

It was 2008 when Duerig said, "I would like to see SMST go beyond being a simple teaching and information sharing organization, and do more to promote innovative research and development both at universities and industry." Now the Founders' Grant brings his dream to fruition. This industry pioneer, founder, and philanthropist has discovered a way to help shape the future of research in the field he loves. For that, Duerig's impact will forever remain in the collective memory of the SMST community.