

Composites Person of the Year



Dr. Michael Connolly

The SPE® Composites Division has named Dr. Michael Connolly, principal scientist and program manager-Urethane Composites Huntsman Polyurethanes as the 2012-2013 recipient of the group's prestigious **Composites Person of the Year** award. Connolly is being recognized for his contributions to the SPE Composites Division and the broader composites industry at this year's SPE Automotive Composites Conference & Exhibition during opening ceremonies.

First given in 2004, the **Composites Person of the Year** award publicly acknowledges a contributor who has provided significant aid to the SPE Composites Division, particularly during the prior year, as well as made broader contributions to the composites industry as a whole. Nominations are reviewed by the board and one recipient is selected by the current division chair in consultation with the current awards chair. Previous winners of the award include:

- Dan Buckley of American GFM,
- John Muzzy of the Georgia Institute of Technology,
- James Griffing of The Boeing Co.,
- Fred Deans of Allied Composite Technologies LLC,
- Peggy Malnati of Malnati & Associates LLC,
- Dale Grove of US Silica,
- Dale Brosius of Quickstep Composites LLC, and
- Creig Bowland of PPG Industries.

Explaining how Connolly was selected as this year's award recipient, SPE Composites Division immediate past-chair, Dale Brosius – who is president of his own consulting company as well as president of Quickstep Composites LLC – explained, "Michael was selected for the **Composites Person of the Year** award for a number of reasons. First, he led the creation of a totally new website for the Composites Division, with significant rebranding and enhanced functionality to tie into social media, including a blog and Twitter® applications. He also led the successful application for the SPE Communications Excellence Award, which our division achieved for 2012-2013. He took on a greatly expanded role as technical program chair of the 2013 SPE ACCE, and was very active in scanning various news outlets across the globe for potential innovations and developments that were worth pursuing for program content, then engaging the program committee to solicit papers. As a result, we have the largest and strongest technical program content of any ACCE conference to date. These efforts required a lot of investment of time on Michael's part. Furthermore, he has

achieved Honored Service Member status within SPE — the result of many years of dedicated service to both the Composites and Automotive Divisions of our society. And last, but not least, Michael was selected for the position of chair-elect for the Composites Division, and will become division chair in 2015."

In his current job at Huntsman, Connolly specializes in composite-resin development, materials structure / property / process characterization, test-method development, and customer programs. He has worked for Huntsman for 17 years supporting polyurethane product development in the automotive, consumer, and industrial market segments. He has spent a total of 29 years in materials development including basic research, polymer composites, thermoplastic polyurethanes and engineering thermoplastics, plus acoustic, energy absorbing, and structural foams. Connolly has authored or co-authored 12 papers on polyurethane composites at international conferences since 2005 and holds 2 patents. He holds a Ph.D. degree in Polymer Science & Engineering from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and a B.S. degree in Polymer Chemistry from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Connolly is a long-time member of the American Chemical Society (since 1982) and SPE (since 1992). He has long been involved in SPE and currently is both chair-elect and communications chair for SPE's Composites Division where he also manages the division website (<http://www.specomposites.org/>). Previously he also served as chair-elect and then chair of the SPE Automotive Division and is a former director of that board. He was one of the original organizers of the SPE Automotive Composites Conference and Exhibition (ACCE), serving as sponsorship chair (2001), event chair (2002), and technical program chair (2003, 2004, and 2013). In addition, Connolly is currently a member of the advisory board for the Fraunhofer Project Centre for Composites Research at Western University and he formerly chaired the American Plastic Council's Automotive Roadmap Technical Committee. He was named an SPE Honored Service Member in 2013.

