

## FEATURE

# Pittcon 2021 was held as a Virtual Event

The Pittcon Conference & Expo, like the whole world, had to adapt due to the new coronavirus pandemic and held its 72<sup>nd</sup> edition as a virtual event, which took place March 8-12, 2021.



Pittcon 2021 Virtual Entrance - Pittcon image.

Pittcon is a conference and exposition on analytical chemistry that advances and enriches the scientific endeavor by connecting scientists worldwide, facilitating the exchange of research and ideas, showcasing the latest in laboratory innovation, and funding science education and diffusion.

The organizing committee of Pittcon 2021 wanted to ensure that the participants and exhibitors of the event, the people who make up the international scientific community, had access to the same dynamic exhibition and technical programming available in a Pittcon in person.

"Our decision process, our research, led us to attend a multitude of other virtual shows," states Pittcon 2021 President Dr. Neal Dando. "We wanted to see what worked and what did not. We talked to our exhibitors, sent out surveys to our thousands of attendees, and most important of all, we listened."

The mission of the Pittcon committee and staff was not only to present Pittcon 2021 as a different event from what Pittcon used to be, but also to present a virtual show different from other virtual shows.

### Technical Program

The technical program consisted of 1,350 presentations, including symposia invited and organized sessions, contributed sessions, and oral and poster sessions. The conference was presented virtually throughout the week of the virtual event.

The Pittcon Technical Program hosted a transnational collection of chemists from the private, academic, and government sectors presenting their research, findings, insights and other advances to thousands of attendees. In addition, this year, for the first time in the conference's over 71-year history, the Pittcon Technical Program was presented entirely via virtual platform.

"We are elated to have such a tremendous response to participate in our technical program this year," states Neal Dando, Ph.D., Pittcon 2021 President. "The depth and modernity of our technical programming has always been one of our primary strengths. Witnessing this level of worldwide participation for our first virtual show is a testament to that."



Virtual access platform for the Pittcon 2021 Content - Pittcon image.

The Pittcon conference is organized into ten tracks representative of contemporary analytical chemistry. These tracks are: Bioanalytical; Cannabis and Hemp; Energy; Environmental; Food Science and Agriculture; Forensics and Toxicology; Industry and Manufacturing; Life Sciences; Nanotechnology and Materials Science; and Pharmaceutical. Other areas of focus, such as Art and Historic Preservation are also presented at the conference, as well as topics that focus on subjects such as spectroscopy, chromatography, and even grant writing.

Pittcon also received Joseph B. Powell, Ph.D., Shell's Chief Scientist, Chemical Engineering, as the 2021 Wallace H. Coulter speaker. The Wallace H. Coulter Lecture is the annual keynote talk at Pittcon and an integral part of the Pittcon Technical Program. The lecture is part of a greater technical program that works to keep the scientific community informed on the latest research and developments, presented by leading scientists from around the world. This year's Coulter lecture was entitled 'The Industrial Laboratory for Energy and Chemicals: Past, Present and Future'.

Industrial laboratories have played an important role in the innovation and commercialization of new technologies. Dr. Powell's lecture presented case studies on technology development, including enhanced oil recovery, development of chemical processes with homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysts and advanced separations, and biofuels and new energies. The breadth of laboratory, pilot and demonstration plant studies required to understand underlying fundamentals and de-risk scale up were also described.

## Awards

Each year, Pittcon provides a venue place where scientists who have made outstanding contributions to analytical chemistry and applied spectroscopy are honored. This year, Pittcon featured 15 such awards presented to 17 distinguished scientists from throughout the world.

The Pittsburgh Spectroscopy Award was presented to Dr. Isao Noda of the University of Delaware. Dr. Noda was chosen based on his outstanding contribution in the advanced understanding and applications in the field of spectroscopy, his leadership in the scientific community, and his guidance of young scientists. His research interest is in the broad area of polymer science and vibrational spectroscopy.

The Pittsburgh Analytical Chemistry Award was presented to Dr. Richard Yost of the University of Florida. Dr. Yost is widely recognized as a world leader in the field of mass spectrometry and analytical chemistry, most notably for his co-invention of the triple quadrupole mass spectrometer, which has revolutionized important measurements impacting human health and well-being in the fields drug metabolism, pharmacokinetics, environmental studies, and biological analyses.

The Pittsburgh Conference Achievement Award was presented to Dr. Robbyn Anand of Iowa State University. Dr. Anand and her research group have developed methods for single-cell analysis, electrokinetic separations in complex media, and voltammetry at bipolar electrodes. She is also the founder of the Midwest Retreat for Diversity in Chemistry.

The Pittcon Heritage Award was presented to Dr. Peter Hupe of Agilent Technologies (retired). Dr. Hupe founded Hupe-Busch, which eventually became the Agilent Technologies High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) Business. He is also being recognized for his technical and business contributions in the field of Preparative Gas Chromatography, his role in the founding of the respected HPLC Series of International Meetings, and his academic achievements as the Chair of Instrumental Analysis and Professor at the Free University of Amsterdam.

Pittcon 2021 also hosted sessions for three awards from the American Chemical Society (ACS) - the ACS Advances in Measurement Science Lectureship Awards, the ACS Analytical Division Satinder Ahuja Award for Young Investigators in Separation Science, and the ACS Award in Analytical Chemistry.

Pittcon 2021 also hosted two award sessions, each from the Society of Electroanalytical Chemistry (SEAC) and the scientific publisher LCGC. These awards are, respectively, the SEAC Royce W. Murray Award and the SEAC Charles N. Reilley Award, and the LCGC Lifetime Achievement in Chromatography Award and LCGC Emerging Leader in Chromatography Award.

Additional awards presented were the Coblenz Society Williams-Wright Award, the Chromatography Forum of the Delaware Valley's Dal Nogare Award, and the Ralph N. Adams Award. Of special note was the Chinese American Chromatography Association (CACA) Award, which celebrated its inaugural presentation at Pittcon 2021.

## Exposition

At the exhibition the attendees had the opportunity to interact with the companies participating in the event through a virtual booth. The companies displayed their new products through images that had links to websites with product descriptions and videos. Attendees could also interact virtually with the exhibitors through an online service in real time by text or voice channel.



Exhibitors' virtual booths platform - Pittcon image.

Exhibiting companies included Analytik Jena US, Bruker Corporation, LECO Corporation, Metrohm USA, Milestone Inc., PerkinElmer, Shimadzu Scientific Instruments, Inc., Thermo Fisher Scientific, among many others.



Thermo Fisher's virtual booth - Pittcon image.

Virtual Pittcon will remain on-demand until June 12, 2021. Therefore, if you are registered, you can visit and see all the presentation you may have missed and review the presentation you want.

For more information on the Pittcon 2021 visit: <https://pittcon.org/>