Ami E. Berkowitz appointed to endowed chair of the Center for Magnetic Recording Research

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RESEARCH PHYSICIST TO JOIN UCSD MAGNETIC RECORDING CENTER

Dr. Ami E. Berkowitz, a leading expert on the magnetic materials used by the nation's thriving magnetic recording industry, has been appointed to an endowed chair of the Center for Magnetic Recording Research (CMRR) at the University of California, San Diego and named a professor in UCSD's Department of Physics.

Berkowitz, a research physicist at General Electric Research and Development Center in Schenectady, New York, since 1968, is a specialist in the physics of small magnetic particles, which give tape and disks made for video recorders and computers their magnetic properties.

He will assume his duties at the La Jolla campus on October 1.

CMRR was established in 1983 with major industry backing to improve magnetic recording technology. Its research is devoted to increasing the amount of data that can be stored on a tape or disk, improving the reliability of computer disk recorders, laying the groundwork for smaller and lighter equipment, and increasing the speed and precision of tape and disk production.

"There are lots of material scientists in the world, but there are not many who specialize in materials for magnetic recording," CMRR director John C. Mallinson said recently.

"We wanted to get a materials scientist who is expert in the magnetic materials that are used in magnetic recording systems. It is a coup to get someone with Dr. Berkowitz's expertise on our faculty," he said.

Berkowitz earned a Ph.D. in physics at the University of Pennsylvania in 1953 while working at the Franklin Institute Research Laboratories in Philadelphia. He managed the Institute's magnetic and thermoelectricity section.

In 1960 he joined the IBM Research Center in Yorktown Heights, New York, where he worked on magnetic alloys and compounds. Five years later, he transferred to the IBM Components Division in Burlington, Vermont as manager of the materials branch, which investigates the computer memory applications of magnetic thin films.

At General Electric, Berkowitz helped develop a technique called spark erosion for making fine particles of a wide variety of materials, including metals, alloys and various compounds. Such small particles are in demand in industry for their magnetic, heat resistant and electric properties.

At UCSD, he plans to study the magnetic behavior of recording materials in terms of their physical structure and intrinsic magnetic properties.

"I've been very much interested in the area of magnetic recording, particularly the development of new recording materials, over the years. Joining CMRR gives me the opportunity to pursue this interest. I expect it to be a stimulating atmosphere to work in," Berkowitz said recently.

Berkowitz co-edited a two-volume book titled Magnetism and Metallurgy in 1969, contributed a chapter to the Encyclopedia of Physics and has published some forty scientific papers. He holds 14 patents.

Berkowitz's endowed chair is the last of four that were created in 1983, when CMRR was established at UCSD. The holders of the other three are Dr. Jack C. Wolf and Dr. H. Neal Bertram, both professors of electrical engineering and computer sciences, and Dr. Frank E. Talke, professor of applied physics and engineering sciences.

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