



F. Duncan Haldane

2016 Nobel Prizewinning Physicist Was Professor at UC San Diego

F. Duncan Haldane, the Princeton University physicist who was awarded a 2016 Nobel Prize in Physics this week for his research into the properties of matter in extreme states, was a professor of physics at UC San Diego from 1986 to 1992.

Haldane, who joined the Princeton faculty after he left the La Jolla campus, shared the Nobel Prize with David Thouless of the University of Washington and J. Michael Kosterlitz of Brown University “for theoretical discoveries of topological phase transitions and topological phases of matter.”

“They have used advanced mathematical methods to study unusual phases, or states, of matter, such as superconductors, superfluids or thin magnetic films,” the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said in announcing the award.

Haldane said in an interview publicized by Princeton University on the day he was informed of his Nobel Prize that “My work was a kind of sleeper. It was a very theoretical thing. ... It didn't become such a big deal until my work got extended” by other scientists.

On the nature of the discovery, he added, “All these things are things that no one expects. You stumble over something and then you find the big picture after.”

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