

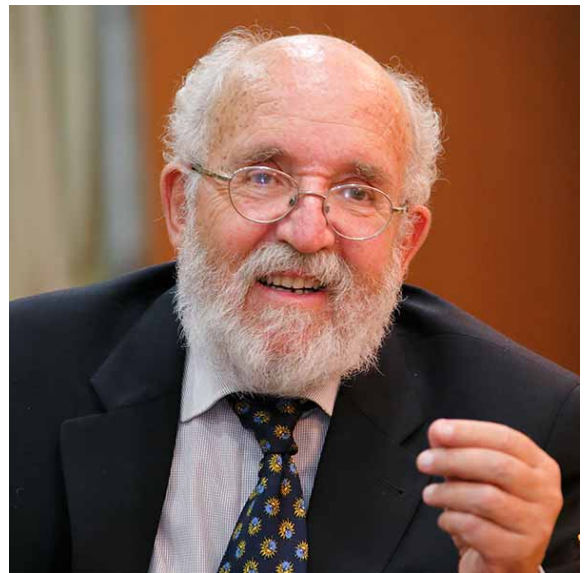
February 24, 2016 | By Jade Griffin and Darlene Lopez

## Prominent Astrophysicist Michel Mayor to Speak at UC San Diego March 16

**Part of the Kyoto Prize Symposium, the event is free and open to the public**

World-renowned astrophysicist Michel Mayor, Ph.D., will speak at the University of California, San Diego on March 16 at 3:30 p.m., as part of the annual Kyoto Prize Symposium. To attend the free talk, which is open to the public, please visit: [kyotoprizeusa.org](http://kyotoprizeusa.org).

Mayor received the 2015 Kyoto Prize—Japan’s highest private award for global achievement—in the area of “Basic Sciences” for his pivotal contributions in astrophysics, including the discovery of the first extrasolar planet orbiting a Sun-like star.



*Michel Mayor*

The Kyoto Prize Symposium will feature a special talk by Mayor in the Price Center West Ballroom on the UC San Diego campus. The event is open to all students, staff and faculty, as well as local community members. In addition, UC San Diego will facilitate bringing high school students—many from underserved areas of the region—to campus with the goal of introducing them to the university and the idea of pursuing a career in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields.

“UC San Diego is honored to participate in the Kyoto Prize Symposium again this year,” said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “This international event recognizes some of the world’s top leaders in scientific progress, cultural advancement and human betterment, and connects these luminaries with local high school students to inspire the next generation of leaders.”

Mayor is regarded worldwide for shaping the way we look at our universe. He discovered the first extrasolar planet, or exoplanet, which is a planet that orbits a main-sequence, or Sun-like, star outside of our solar system. Mayor made the discovery by continuously refining and improving astronomical observation technology, including the development of a series of spectrographs. Using this equipment, he deployed a technique known as the radial velocity method to measure the velocity of exoplanets. Today, research sparked by Mayor's contributions is raising expectations that an exoplanet similar to Earth could be discovered in the not-too-distant future.

Mayor is a professor emeritus at the University of Geneva in Switzerland. For his work, he has received prestigious prizes including the Albert Einstein Medal, Shaw Prize in Astronomy and Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society. He is a member of the European Academy of Sciences, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and National Academy of Sciences.

Mayor's presentation is one in the three-part Kyoto Prize Symposium hosted jointly by UC San Diego with the University of San Diego, San Diego State University and Point Loma Nazarene University. In addition to Mayor, this year's Kyoto Prize laureates include:

- In "Advanced Technology," Toyoki Kunitake, the first scientist to discover synthetic bilayer membranes. He is the creator of a new field of chemistry based on molecular self-assembly, which is widely recognized as one of the most useful concepts in advanced materials design. He will speak at San Diego State University on March 16 at 10 a.m.
- In "Arts and Philosophy," John Neumeier, a world-renowned choreographer, who has combined traditional ballet techniques and vocabulary to broaden the range of bodily expression in capturing human psychology. Neumeier has been the artistic director and chief choreographer of the Hamburg Ballet in Germany for over 40 years. He will present at the University of San Diego on March 17 at 10:30 a.m.

Established by the Inamori Foundation in 1985, the Kyoto Prize strives to honor significant contributions to the scientific, cultural and spiritual betterment of humankind. The president of this nonprofit organization is Kazuo Inamori, founder and chairman emeritus (retired) of Kyocera and KDDI Corporation.

The March 16 talk with Mayor will take place in UC San Diego's Price Center West Ballroom from 3:30 to 5 p.m. The presentation will be followed by a reception with light refreshments, providing an opportunity for students and other attendees to meet Mayor. For more information and to register for the free symposium, please visit [kyotoprizeusa.org](http://kyotoprizeusa.org).

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## MEDIA CONTACT

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