

## **Alumni Association will honor Paul Chu and Brian Maple at annual awards banquet--named Distinguished Alumni of the Year; and Sherley Anne Williams named Distinguished Professor of the Year.**

**June 9, 1987**

Media Contact: Susan Pollock, 534-3120

### UCSD HONORS ALUMNI WHO ARE LEADERS IN SUPERCONDUCTIVITY RESEARCH

The Alumni Association at the University of California, San Diego will honor physicists Paul Chu of the University of Houston and Brian Maple of UCSD -- both pioneers in superconductivity, a field electrified by a series of breakthroughs since last fall -- at its annual awards banquet on June 12.

Chu won international attention earlier this year when he developed new superconductivity materials which broke a high temperature barrier that has restricted commercial use of these highly promising substances.

Chu and Maple, named Distinguished Alumni of the Year, received their doctorates from UCSD in 1968 and 1969, respectively. Both studied under the late physicist Bernd Matthias, who is widely recognized as the "Father of Superconductivity."

The Alumni Association also named author Sherley Anne Williams, Distinguished Professor of the Year. Her first novel, "Dessa Rose," has generated enthusiasm from critics and the reading public alike.

UCSD Chancellor Richard C. Atkinson will address the banquet on the state of research and education at UCSD, and Mark Broughton, president of the Alumni Association, will present the awards. Four outstanding seniors and two top senior athletes also will be honored.

Maple and Chu have spent their adult lives exploring the properties and limits of superconductors, materials that transport electric currents without resistance when they are chilled with cold liquefied gas. A series of breakthroughs in the field has put the scientists in the news repeatedly since last fall.

Chu is credited with launching a technological revolution with the creation of the first high-temperature superconductors, a new class of materials that may open the door to new super-fast computers, magnetically levitated trains, super conducting transmission lines, and other high tech innovations. His discovery of a material that was super conductive at 98 Kelvin (minus 284 F) easily broke the 77 Kelvin barrier, the temperature at which inexpensive liquid nitrogen can be used for cooling.

Maple is concentrating on a second basic property of superconductors, their ability to expel a magnetic field from its interior. He recently identified a compound which produces an extremely high magnetic field, which may have applications in laboratory research, high energy accelerators, and magnetic resonance imaging.

Williams' "Dessa Rose," a story that brings together a renegade slave woman and an abandoned white woman who gave sanctuary to runaway slaves, was nominated for four major literary awards, including a Pulitzer Prize.

The book is now in its fourth printing. Film rights went to producer Irwin Winkler, winner of 37 Academy Awards, and United Artists.

Alice Walker, author of "The Color Purple," called Dessa Rose "A deep, rich, compelling work that begins to reconstruct the past of women's friendships across racial lines during the period of American slavery."

Commenting on the association's award-winners, Dan Rodriguez, director of UCSD's Alumni Affairs, said: "The outstanding achievements of Maple and Chu symbolize UCSD's excellence in science and research. And we feel that Williams epitomizes UCSD's -strength in the humanities and arts."

The banquet, which will be held at the La Valencia in La Jolla, begins at 8 p.m.

(June 9, 1987)