



U.S. National Committee

2024 Awards



cigre
United States

USNC Awards

The Philip Sporn Award

For career contributions advancing electric power systems in theory, design and/or operation for the benefit of society in the United States, and for aspiring to Philip Sporn's 'Locus of Discontent' approach i.e., always challenging the status quo to advance technology for the betterment of society.

Dale Douglass Award for Technical Achievement

For leadership and participation in CIGRE technical activities internationally at the Study Committee or Working Group levels aspiring to the level of dedication exhibited by Dale Douglass.

Attwood Associate Award

This award is made to honor the contributions and memory of Frederic Attwood of the U.S.A. who, with J. Tribot Laspiere of France foresaw the need for an international organization in the field of power engineering and who became the first Chairman of the U.S. National Committee upon the founding of CIGRE in the year 1921.

Virginia Sulzberger Service Award

For notable volunteer contributions to CIGRE USNC. This award is named in honor of the contributions of Virginia Sulzberger who actively served as USNC Secretary-Treasurer from 2000 to 2008, and was recognized with the CIGRE Distinguished Member Award in 2006.

Collective Member Award

For outstanding leadership and continuing managerial, technical, and financial support of the activities of the U.S. National Committee and CIGRE over an extended period of time.

2024 Honorees

John D. McDonald, P.E.
Nenad Uzelac

Dr. Chen-Ching Liu

Albert Livshitz
Christopher Mertz
Todd Ramey
Dr. Luke van der Zel
Hugh Zhu

Marianna Vaiman

Mitsubishi Electric
Power Products, Inc

CIGRE Awards

International Distinguished Member Award

Every two years, longstanding services to CIGRE are rewarded by a “Distinguished Member” award, upon proposal from their National Committees.

CIGRE Medal

The CIGRE Medal is highest recognition for proven outstanding technical or engineering contribution to CIGRE and the engineering field, and proven leadership for the benefit of the organization. A maximum of 2 awards every 2 years.

Women in Energy

This award is intended to recognize outstanding contributions of WiE members to CIGRE activities.

**Earle C. (Rusty)
Bascom III
Rana Mukerji
Amanda Olson**

Dr. Mladen Kezunovic

Jessica Lau



John D. McDonald, P.E.

The Philip Sporn Award

John D. McDonald, P.E. is Founder & CEO of JDM Associates, LLC. John has 50 years of experience in the electric utility transmission and distribution industry. John received his B.S.E.E. and M.S.E.E. degrees from Purdue University, and an M.B.A. degree from the University of California-Berkeley. John is a Life Fellow of IEEE (member for 53 years), member of IEEE-HKN (inducted 53 years ago) and Tau Beta Pi (inducted 51 years ago), member of the Delta Sigma Phi Fraternity, and was awarded the IEEE Millennium Medal in 2000, the 2002 IEEE Power & Energy Society (PES) Excellence in Power Distribution Engineering Award, the 2003 IEEE PES Substations Committee Distinguished Service Award, the 2015 IEEE PES Meritorious Service Award, the 2016 CIGRE Distinguished Member Award, the 2016 CIGRE USNC Attwood Associate Award, the 2021 CIGRE Honorary Member Award, the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative (SECC) Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Delta Sigma Phi Fraternity Career Achievement Award. John is Past President of the IEEE PES, the Past Chair of the IEEE PES Substations Committee, the IEEE Division VII Past Director, and a member of the National Academy of Engineering. John was on the Board of Governors of the IEEE-SA (Standards Association), is an IEEE Foundation Director and Vice President of Development, and is a Founding Board Member of the SECC.

John has been a member of CIGRE for 18 years, and has been the CIGRE USNC VP, Technical Activities for 15 years! In the 103-year history of the CIGRE USNC, the longest a Chair of the US Technical Committee had served is 8 years! John has established the USNC as the best practice in technical activities regarding number of US subject matter experts serving on CIGRE WGs, number of US NGN members (young experts) serving on CIGRE WGs, number of US women serving on CIGRE WGs, and number of US women serving as WG Conveners. John received the 2009 Purdue University Outstanding Electrical and Computer Engineer Award and the 2023 Purdue University Distinguished Engineering Alumni Award. John teaches Smart Grid courses at the Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and Smart Grid courses for various IEEE PES local chapters as an IEEE PES Distinguished Lecturer (since 1999). John has published one hundred fifty papers and articles, has co-authored five books and has one US patent.



Nenad Uzelac

The Philip Sporn Award

Mr. Nenad Uzelac is the director of Global Research at G&W Electric Co. which headquarter is near Chicago, IL, USA. Nenad has 25 years of experience in R&D, designing, developing and testing Switchgear and Control gear. For 20 years he's been part of IEEE Switchgear committee and CIGRE. Currently Nenad is chair of CIGRE A3 technical committee covering T&D Equipment, and a chair of IEEE Switchgear Education, Recognition and Publication subcommittee. He is a passionate advocate for Innovation, Education and Collaboration in the field of Energy Transition.



Dr. Chen-Ching Liu

Dale Douglass Award for Technical Achievement

Since Jan. 2018, Professor Chen-Ching Liu has been with Virginia Tech as American Electric Power Professor and Director of the Power and Energy Center. During 1983-2017, Professor Liu was on the faculty of University of Washington, Iowa State University, University College Dublin (Ireland), and Washington State University. Professor Liu was Associate Dean, College of Engineering, at the University of Washington from 2000-2005. He also served as Deputy Principal, and later Acting Principal, of the College of Engineering, Mathematics, and Physical Sciences at University College Dublin from 2008-2011.

Over more than 30 years as a Member of CIGRE and USNC, Dr. Liu has contributed to CIGRE through various task forces, working groups, and study committees. Specifically, he served as Convenor of Task Force on Practical Use of Expert Systems for Power System Planning and Operations. Professor Liu was also U.S. Member of Study Committee SC 38 (Power System Analysis) and SC C6 (Distributed Generation and Distribution Systems). Currently, Dr. Liu is U.S. Member for Study Committee D2 (Information Systems and Telecommunication). Professor Liu also plays a leadership role in IEEE. He received an IEEE Third Millennium Medal in 2000 and the Power and Energy Society Outstanding Power Engineering Educator Award in 2004. He chaired the IEEE Power and Energy Society Fellow Committee, Technical Committee on Power System Analysis, Computing and Economics, and Outstanding Power Engineering Educator Award Committee. He is a Life Fellow of the IEEE, Member of Virginia Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, and Member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering.



Albert Livshitz

Attwood Associate Award

Albert Livshitz graduated from the Belorussian Polytechnical Institute in 1980 with a MSEE Degree. He has over 40 years of experience in design, testing and modernization of power switchgear equipment. He currently holds the position of Principal Engineer for Qualus, LLC. He is a member of IEEE C37 Switchgear Main Committee and IEEE PCIC Safety Committee and represents the US National Committee at CIGRE Study Committee A3, Transmission and Distribution Switchgear.



Christopher Mertz

Attwood Associate Award

Christopher Mertz has worked in the power industry for 11 years. He is currently a Senior Manager – Transmission & Interconnection at Candela Renewables, and previously spent a decade at Dominion Energy in various engineering and management roles. Chris joined the CIGRE US National Committee in 2013 and held leadership positions in the USNC NGN starting in 2014 until serving as the CIGRE USNC NGN Chair in 2019 and 2020. Chris is a Senior Member of the IEEE and is a licensed Professional Engineer in the state of Virginia.

Chris received his BSEE and MSEE degrees from Virginia Tech in 2011 and 2013, respectively. He received an MBA from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2019.



Todd Ramey

Attwood Associate Award

Todd Ramey, senior vice president of markets and digital strategy, leads MISO's markets and technology transformation efforts. Ramey manages teams focused on advancing technologies, transforming and maturing capabilities, and developing and executing market design and evaluation enhancements. This work drives reliability and helps to meet the needs of MISO's customers in the future.

Ramey has held several key positions at MISO, including managing real-time operations, as well as day-to-day transmission and generation dispatch operations. He also played a central role in developing and launching MISO's energy markets in 2005 and ancillary services in 2009. In addition to spearheading efforts to improve those markets and their operations continuously, Ramey also led MISO stakeholder activities related to market design and function, securing stakeholder support for many market enhancements.

Ramey joined MISO in 2001 from the Indianapolis Power & Light Co., where he served as Power Marketing & Generation System Operations director. Ramey has more than 30 years of experience in wholesale market design, administration, and generation and transmission system operations.

He earned a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering from Purdue University and a Master of Business Administration from Butler University.



Dr. Luke van der Zel

Attwood Associate Award

Dr. van der Zel is experienced and internationally published in the areas of Power Transformers, High Voltage, SF₆ (and SF₆ Alternatives), Gas Insulated Substations and Partial Discharge Detection. Dr. van der Zel's 36 years of experience has been derived from a balance of global research groups, hands-on electric utility expertise and years of experience in High Voltage laboratories.

Dr. van der Zel is currently a Principal Technical Executive in the EPRI Substations program. His research extends beyond the laboratory to field applications in EPRI member substations, where he helps demonstrate the practical value of EPRI's research. Prior to EPRI, Dr van der Zel was a Chief Consultant in ESKOM and managed SF₆ and GIS research strategies. He is an active member of IEEE and CIGRE. Most recently, Dr. van der Zel supported a segment of the high-voltage round-robin testing for the new CIGRE Technical Brochure 849 on the Electrical Performance of new non-SF₆ gases and gas mixtures for gas-insulated systems. He thoroughly enjoys the collaboration that is so helpful in advancing the industry together, including his recently concluded term as the USNC D1 regular member.



Hugh Zhu

Attwood Associate Award

Hugh Zhu received his Ph.D. in the UK. He has over 30 years of experience in dielectric testing, condition assessment, maintenance, and failure investigation of the insulation systems of rotating machines. He has worked in research, insulation testing, consulting organizations, and utilities in the UK, Canada, and the USA. Hugh currently chairs the two IEEE standards of rotating machine insulation testing. He is a USA Regular Member of the CIGRE A1 Study Committee from 2018-2024 and has participated in more than 10 CIGRE Working Groups..



Marianna Vaiman

Virginia Sulzberger Service Award

Marianna Vaiman is co-founder and CEO of V&R Energy. She has over 30 years of experience in developing and deploying innovative technologies for the electric utility industry. She has B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Electrical Engineering. Her areas of expertise include stability, resilience, optimization, and control in power systems with a high penetration of inverter-based resources; the use of synchrophasor measurements for enhanced situational awareness and control; and the application of large language models for power system analysis.

Marianna is a VP of Marketing at CIGRE US National Committee and a member of CIGRE WG C2.44 “Operational Strategies to Manage Power System Minimum Operating Conditions”. Marianna is an IEEE Fellow. She was recognized as IEEE PES Women Engineers and Achievers in Power & Energy. She is a member of Power & Energy Magazine Editorial Board, a member of IEEE PES Industry Technical Support Leadership Committee, and a member of IEEE PES Long Range Planning subcommittee.



MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC
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Mitsubishi Electric Power Products, Inc.

Collective Member Award

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Earle C. (Rusty) Bascom, III

CIGRE Distinguished Member Award

Earle C. (Rusty) Bascom, III holds B.S. and M.E. degrees in Electric Power Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and an M.B.A. from the University of New York at Albany. Mr. Bascom began his career in 1990 working with underground cable systems at Power Technologies, Inc. and, later, Power Delivery Consultants, Inc. before founding Electrical Consulting Engineers, P.C. in 2010 whereas President and Principal Engineer he continues to provide engineering services in the analysis, design, specification, installation oversight and operational characteristics of underground and submarine transmission and distribution cable systems.

Mr. Bascom is a Senior Member of the IEEE, Power & Energy Society, Past Chair of the Insulated Conductors Committee (2018-2019), member of the Standards Association, a member of CIGRÉ, U.S. National Committee representative to CIGRE B1, CAG, TAG and Working Groups B1.35, B1.50, B1.56 and B1.72, and a registered professional engineer in the U.S.A. in NY, FL, TX, AZ, MD, DE, NV and the District of Columbia. He has authored over 75 technical papers and publications and is the holder of one patent. Mr. Bascom can be contacted at r.bascom@ec-engineers.com.



Rana Mukerji

CIGRE Distinguished Member Award

Rana Mukerji, Senior Vice President, Market Structures at the New York Independent System Operator, is responsible for the Market Design; Product and Project Management; Strategic and Business Planning; Research and Development; and Market Training teams.

Mr. Mukerji joined the NYISO in 2006. Previously, he spent several years as a global leader for ABB's Utility T&D Services, Asset Management and Consulting businesses in North Carolina and Zurich. Prior to ABB, he was General Manager for GE's Power Systems Energy Consulting Division and was instrumental in establishing the GE-MAPS software as an industry standard tool for evaluating competitive power markets.

He earned a B.S in Electrical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, a M.S. in Electric Power Engineering and a M.B.A. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He is a graduate of Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program. Mr. Mukerji is also a NY registered Professional Engineer.



Amanda Olson

CIGRE Distinguished Member Award

Amanda (Mandy) Olson serves as the Vice President of Engineering for Transmission & Distribution Services at Burns & McDonnell, focusing on advanced grid technology strategy and engineering excellence. She holds a BS in Electrical Engineering from the Missouri University of Science and Technology and an MS in Business Administration from the University of Missouri Kansas City.

Mandy's influence extends beyond Burns & McDonnell as she assumes key roles within CIGRE. Serving as the US C3 Study Committee Representative and Chair of the ELECTRA Editorial Board, she collaborates with global leaders to curate cutting-edge content, fostering knowledge exchange in Power Systems on a worldwide scale. Her contributions to various CIGRE committees and initiatives, including the Women in Energy Chair and leadership roles within the Next Generation Network, exemplify her steadfast dedication to engineering prowess, sustainability, and visionary leadership.



Dr. Mladen Kezunovic

CIGRE Medal Award

The CIGRE Medal is highest recognition for proven outstanding technical or engineering contribution to CIGRE and the engineering field, and proven leadership for the benefit of the organization. A maximum of 2 awards every 2 years.

Dr. Mladen Kezunovic (Life Fellow, IEEE) received the B.Sc. degree from the University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia, in 1974, and the M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering from the University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, USA, in 1977 and 1980, respectively. He has been with Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA, for over 35 years, where he is currently a University Distinguished Professor, Regents Professor, Eugene E. Webb Professor, and the Site Director of the “Power Engineering Research Center” Consortium. He served for over 30 years as the Principal Consultant of XpertPower Associates, a consulting firm specializing in power systems data analytics. His expertise is in protective relaying, automated power system disturbance analysis, computational intelligence, data analytics, and smart grids. He has authored over 600 papers, given over 120 seminars, invited lectures, and short courses, and consulted for over 60 companies worldwide. He is a CIGRE Fellow, an Honorary and Distinguished Member, a registered Professional Engineer in Texas, and a member of the National Academy of Engineering.



Jessica Lau

Women in Energy Award

Jessica Lau is a Grid Strategy consultant and stakeholder engagement expert with over 17 years of experience in the energy industry. As the founder of Artful Pathways, Jessica combines technical expertise and human-centered strategies to power the future grid. Specializing in grid modernization strategies, she focuses on holistic and collaborative approaches that break down silos and improve organizational efficiency.

Known for her big-picture thinking and results-driven leadership, Jessica partners with organizations to develop strategic roadmaps that turn vision into reality. She has led multi-year initiatives for Fortune 500 companies and the Department of Energy, establishing vital partnerships with local communities and technology developers. Her work in implementation and change management has driven efficiency gains and supported long-term infrastructure goals. Her expertise includes transmission and distribution planning, smart grid technology, wholesale energy markets, and resilience projects. She has worked at ISO New England, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Xcel Energy, and Con Edison.

As Chair of Women in Energy at CIGRE USNC, Jessica champions gender diversity, leading initiatives that increase visibility, participation, and recognition of women in the energy industry. She also co-founded the USNC Next Generation Network and launched its first NGN paper competition to support emerging leaders. Her commitment to inclusivity and mentorship shapes her consulting and coaching style, empowering people and advancing energy solutions.

Jessica holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering and Math and an M.S. in Power Systems Management.



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