

SME Division Awards

Coal & Energy Division Awards

COAL & ENERGY DIVISION DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD TO BENJAMIN R. HARDMAN

The Distinguished Service Award is presented to Benjamin R. Hardman “for his passion and individual achievements in the coal mining industry, his employee-customer relationships necessary for successful business, and his support to SME.”



BENJAMIN R. HARDMAN

Ben Hardman is vice president of sales at J.H. Fletcher & Co. He received a mining engineering degree from West Virginia University in 1995 and a master’s in business administration from Marshall University in 2009.

He began his career with Consol as a project engineer. In 1996, he accepted a position as a service technician with J.H. Fletcher & Co. in the southern West Virginia region. He subsequently advanced to the position of service manager for this region. He has held a number of positions with J.H. Fletcher before his current role as vice president of sales. He is a member of the executive committee and a board member at J.H. Fletcher & Co.

J.W. WOOMER YOUNG ENGINEER AWARD TO THOMAS C. RAUCH

The J.W. Woomer Young Engineer Award is presented to Thomas C. Rauch “for his professionalism in engineering in the mining and minerals processing industries.”



THOMAS C. RAUCH

Tom Rauch is president of McCarl’s Technical Services, the professional services business unit of McCarl’s, a 76-year-old heavy industrial construction company. He is also a partner with ARC Performance Group, a diversified industrial services consulting and investment company. Rauch holds a B.S. degree in mining engineering (focused on mineral processing) and a second B.S. degree in energy business and finance (focused on commodity finance), both from Pennsylvania State University. Prior to joining

McCarl’s and ARC in 2020, Rauch worked in engineering and finance positions at Black Mountain, Kappes Cassidy & Associates, Jacobs, and Taggart Global (now DRA Minerals). Rauch’s career has focused on engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) project delivery in the mining, metals and chemical sectors with specific focus on process design

and taking projects from late-stage engineering through construction, startup and performance guarantee. Rauch continues to focus on high-risk project delivery, tying late-stage project lessons into project execution planning and preliminary engineering. He is proud to serve the SME Foundation as President-Elect.

ROCK MECHANICS AWARD TO ZACHARIAS G. AGIOUTANTIS

The Rock Mechanics Award is presented to Zacharias G. Agioutantis “for distinguished service to the rock mechanics profession through education, applied research, and development of practical software for coal mine ground control.”

Zach Agioutantis is the Mining Engineering Foundation Professor and chair of the Department of Mining Engineering at the University of Kentucky. Prior to that he was a professor and the director of the Rock Mechanics Laboratory at the Technical University of Crete in Greece for more than 25 years.

He has authored or co-authored more than 80 peer-reviewed journal papers and more than 300 conference papers in subjects related to topics including subsidence, applied and theoretical rock mechanics, soil mechanics and slope stability, computer applications in mining and geotechnical engineering, mining systems and mining systems simulation.

He has led and participated in numerous research projects in Greece, the European Union and the United States, mostly in the areas of ground control, geomechanics, automation and sustainable development.

He is active in research related to rock mechanics and computer applications for the mining and geotechnical industry.



ZACHARIAS G. AGIOUTANTIS

STEFANKO BEST PAPER AWARD TO NANA A. AMOAH, ASHISH R. KUMAR AND GUANG XU

The Stefanko Best Paper Award is presented to Nana A. Amoah, Ashish Kumar and Guang Xu for their paper titled “Calibration of low-cost particulate matter sensors for coal dust monitoring,” presented at the MINEXCHANGE 2022 SME Annual Conference & Expo.

Amoah is a mining



NANA A. AMOAH