

Dear AAPPS-DPP members,

Our I-HAC member Pat Diamond (distinguished professor of UCSD) informed me following sad news. Prof. Surko's density fluctuation measurements via CO₂ laser scattering (PRL1976) in ATC at PPPL when he worked at Bell Lab, led to Hasegawa-Mima equation (PRL1977), which greatly advanced plasma turbulence theory in magnetically confined plasma. We lost another outstanding plasma physicist.

Sincerely yours,
M. Kikuchi, CEO

Dear All,

It is with great sadness that I share the passing of Prof. Clifford M. Surko, a Distinguished Professor of Physics, and our first-ever Professor of Graduate Studies, who passed away on Saturday, December 7, 2024, following a brief illness, at the age of 83.

Cliff was a visionary in the fields of plasma physics, atomic physics, and nonlinear dynamics. He was renowned for his pioneering research on waves and turbulence in tokamak plasmas and for developing the buffer gas positron trap, a groundbreaking invention that revolutionized antimatter research worldwide.

Cliff earned his bachelor's and doctoral degrees in Physics from UC Berkeley. His exceptional career included influential leadership roles at Bell Labs before he joined UC San Diego in 1988. His achievements were celebrated with numerous honors, including the James Clerk Maxwell Prize for Plasma Physics in 2014.

Our deepest condolences go to his wife of nearly 60 years, Pamela Surko, and to his family and loved ones during this difficult time.

Cliff was a devoted advocate for Physics students, especially our undergraduate majors, and took an active and enthusiastic part in the 2024 Physics commencement ceremony we held just six months ago. Over the past few months, he has worked closely with Physics leadership to ensure the seamless continuation of his group's research without any disruptions.

As we reflect on Dr. Surko's profound impact as a mentor, colleague, and scholar, we invite those who wish to honor his memory to contact surko@lesliepaton.com for updates on the memorial service being planned for 2025.