

Paul R. Jones Outstanding Paper Award 2022
Charles Scott Weinert



C. Scott Weinert of Oklahoma State University is the recipient of the 2022 Paul R. Jones Outstanding Paper Award for “Die Chemie ist Schwierig: Winkler and the Discovery of Germanium,” *Bull. Hist. Chem.*, Vol. 45, No.1, (2020) 8-15.

Scott Weinert received his Bachelor of Science in 1995 from the University of Michigan. He carried out undergraduate research with Arthur Ashe III on heterocyclic aromatic molecules with unusual heteroatoms. He received an M.S. from the University of Chicago in 1997 and worked with Larry Sita, another leading inorganic chemist. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University in 2000 under the direction of Duward Shriver. After a postdoctoral stint at Purdue University with Ian Rothwell, he joined Oklahoma State University in 2004. He is now Professor of Chemistry.

Professor Weinert is a devotee of the element Ge. He has studied many germanium compounds including oligogermanes, germanes and germylamines. In addition to investigating the chemical properties of organogermane molecules, he developed a serious interest in the history of the element and its discoverer, Clemens Winkler (1838-1904). He also has a passion for heavy metal music, not an unknown addiction in HIST.



The prize winning paper describes events around Winkler discovery of germanium. Winkler was a Professor of Inorganic Chemistry at the Bergakademie Freiberg. Of more importance, he was closely allied with the industrial chemistry of Freiberg. He was Head Smelter at the Niederpfannenstiel Dye Plant and was a master bench chemist. When a new mineral, argyrodite, was discovered in the famous Himmelfürst Mine, Winkler was given a sample to analyze. The dominant element was, of course, silver but an unknown element remained. The fascinating story of the creative and dogged pursuit of the new element is both a chemical triumph and a paradigm of good laboratory chemistry. The political squabble associated with the discovery of a new element is also discussed in detail. The moving photograph of Winkler and Mendeleev and the personal photograph of Winkler's monument in Freiberg make this article both interesting and memorable.