

The 89th meeting of the Southern Division of APS

The 89th meeting of the Southern Division of APS was held February 5-6, 2012 at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex in Birmingham, Alabama in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists. President-elect **Raymond Schneider (Louisiana State University)** coordinated the meeting program and local arrangements. **President David Langston (University of Georgia)** welcomed the group of 113 attendees (58 of whom were students) who contributed 58 presentations to the program.

The meeting kicked-off on Super Bowl Sunday with the graduate student paper competition presided over by **Past-President Boyd Padgett (Louisiana State University)**, who was joined on the judging panel by **Kenny Seebold (University of Kentucky)**, **Bob Kemerait (University of Georgia)**, and **Tom Allen (Mississippi State University)**. A record 36 students participated in this year's competition with participants representing Auburn University, Clemson University, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, Texas Tech University, the University of Arkansas, the University of Florida, the University of Georgia, the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of Tennessee, and even an international student from China Agricultural University. The first place winner (\$300 prize) was **Felix Francis (Louisiana State University; advisor Jong Hyun Ham)** for his presentation: "Comparative genomic analyses of the rice pathogenic *Burkholderia glumae* strains reveals plasticity among the genomes". The second place winner (\$200 prize) was **Jake Fountain (Louisiana State University; advisor Zhi-Yuan Chen)** for his presentation: "Identification and analysis of differentially expressed maize WRKY transcription factors in response to *Aspergillus flavus* colonization of resistant and susceptible germplasm". The third place winner (\$100 prize) was **Jing Zhou (University of Arkansas; advisor Ioannis Tzanetakis)** for her presentation: "An emerging problem for *Celtis* spp. - a novel ampelovirus associated with mottling symptoms". Two additional students received honorable mentions (\$35 prize); they were **Rattandee Gill (University of Georgia; advisor Peggy Ozias-Akins)** for her presentation: "Characterization of a recombinant inbred line (RIL) population for resistance to late leaf spot in cultivated peanut (*Arachis hypogaea*)"; and **Terry Spurlock (University of Arkansas; advisor Craig Rothrock)** for his presentation: "Comparison of methods for isolation and quantification of *Rhizoctonia* spp. from field soil". Framed certificates were also presented to each awardee.

The last day of the meeting started with a symposium entitled "Bacterial Plant Pathogens and Antagonists" presided over by **Jong Hyun Ham, Louisiana State University**. Outstanding presentations were made by the invited speakers, who included **Jong Hyun Ham; Carolee Bull, USDA-ARS, Salinas, CA; Ron Walcott and Ron Gitaitis, University of Georgia; and S. Lu, Mississippi State University**.

Dr. Carol Ishimaru (University of Minnesota) APS President, addressed the group during its annual business meeting providing the annual report on the state and activities of APS.

Secretary-treasurer **Don Ferrin (Louisiana State University)** gave the membership, financial, and necrology reports for the division. **Jason Woodward, President Elect (Texas AgriLife Extension and Tech University)** presented five travel awards of \$300 each to **Oluseyi Fajolu (University of Tennessee)**, **Felix Francis (Louisiana State University)**, **Mala Ganiger (Louisiana State University)**, **Rattandee Gill (University of Georgia)**, and **Heather Young (University of Florida)**. The award checks (\$300 each) had already been sent to the awardees.

Jason Woodward also presented the Outstanding Plant Pathologist Award to **Dr. D. Michael Benson (North Carolina State University)** for his numerous achievements in research and teaching as well as his service to APS and the Southern Division.

Following the reading of this year's resolutions by **Kenny Seebold (University of Kentucky)**, the program came to a close with the passing of the gavel from outgoing President Langston to President-elect Schneider, who adjourned the meeting until next year. Meeting details for 2013 will be released shortly as the group will not meet with Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists next year.

This year's festivities concluded with a dinner social followed by the Southern Division DeBary Bowl emceed by **Jason Woodward**. 'The Systematists' led by Past APS President **John Sherwood (University of Georgia)** took this year's honors in a closely contested battle.

We wish to thank the corporate sponsors for their support of this year's meeting: **BASF, Cheminova, Dow, DuPont, Syngenta** and **Valent**.

The officers for the Southern Division for 2012-2013 are **Raymond Schneider, Louisiana State University, President; Jason Woodward, Texas AgriLife Extension and Tech University, President-Elect; Tom Allen, Mississippi State University, VicePresident; David Langston, University of Georgia, Immediate Past President; Tim Brenneman, University of Georgia, Southern Division Divisional Forum Representative; and Gary Vallad, University of Florida, Secretary-Treasurer.**

To see the complete program, visit the Southern Division at <http://www.apsnet.org/members/divisions/south/Pages/default.aspx>.



Caption: Winners of the graduate student paper competition (shown left to right) **Felix Francis** (first place), **Jing Zhou** (third place), **Jake Fountain** (second place), **Rattandeeep Gill** (honorable mention), and **Terry Spurlock** (honorable mention), and accompanied by **Boyd Padgett**, Immediate Past President of the APS Southern Division.



Caption: Recipients of the 2012 Student Travel Awards included (shown left to right) **Felix Francis** (Louisiana State University), **Rattandeeep Gill** (University of Georgia), **Heather Young** (University of Florida), **Oluseyi Fajolu** (University of Tennessee), and **Mala Ganiger** (Louisiana State University) and accompanied by **Jason Woodward**, Vice President of the APS Southern Division.



Caption: Vice President **Jason Woodward** presents the APS Southern Division Outstanding Plant Pathologist Award to **Dr. D. Michael Benson** (North Carolina State University) for his numerous achievements in research and teaching as well as his service to APS and the Southern Division.



Caption: President-elect **Ray Schneider** receives the official gavel from outgoing President **David Langston** under the watchful eye of APS President **Carol Ishimaru**.