

WINNER OF *CARL SAGAN PRIZE FOR SCIENCE POPULARIZATION* ANNOUNCED

SAN FRANCISCO — Wonderfest, the 19-year-old Bay Area Beacon of Science, announced today that astronomer Gibor Basri has won the 2016 *Carl Sagan Prize for Science Popularization*.

The prize, funded by Google, is presented specifically to recognize and encourage researchers who “have contributed mightily to the public understanding and appreciation of science.” Past Sagan Prize winners include Stanford neuroscientist Robert Sapolsky, SETI Institute astronomer Jill Tarter, and Nobel Laureate biochemist Paul Berg. The prize includes a \$5000 cash award.

“Wonderfest was born in 1997, a few months after astronomer Carl Sagan’s death,” notes the organization’s founding executive director, Tucker Hiatt. “Its work has been dedicated to Sagan’s memory ever since. How fitting that Gibor Basri, an astronomer and science communicator, should receive Wonderfest’s Sagan Prize.”

Wonderfest is a private, nonprofit corporation dedicated to science education and popularization, particularly among adults in the San Francisco Bay Area. Roughly twice every month, it produces in-person science events — and their online videos — in an effort to “enlarge the concept of scientific community.”

Basri is Professor of the Graduate School in the Astronomy Department of the University of California, Berkeley. He holds degrees in physics and astrophysics, including a PhD from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Basri has written over 200 technical papers, and has consistently reached out to the public to share his insights. He has appeared on PBS, NPR, the History Channel, and the Discovery Channel, and has given innumerable public lectures to local and national audiences. These include several prize lectures (e.g., the Shapley lecture and a Kavli Prize symposium lecture) and multiple appearances in several lecture series, including Sonoma State’s “What Physicists Do,” the Foothill College Astronomy Lecture Series, and the Linus Pauling Memorial Lectures.

Throughout his career, Basri has encouraged minorities to participate in science. In this regard, he earned UC Berkeley’s *Chancellor’s Award for Advancing Institutional Excellence*, and he became the founding Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion. He has served on the Board of the Chabot Space and Science Center and now the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, and has given many talks promoting careers in science to underserved youth in the Bay Area.

Additional information: <http://wonderfest.org/sagan-prize>

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