

WINNER OF *CARL SAGAN PRIZE FOR SCIENCE POPULARIZATION* ANNOUNCED

SAN FRANCISCO — Wonderfest, the 23-year-old Bay Area Beacon of Science, announced today that neuroscientist Dr. Matthew Walker has won the 2020 *Carl Sagan Prize for Science Popularization*.

Wonderfest's Sagan Prize 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 UC Berkeley gene editor Jennifer Doudna, SETI Institute astronomer Jill Tarter, and Stanford Nobel Laureate Paul Berg. The prize includes a \$5000 cash award.

"Wonderfest was born in 1997, just a few months after the death of researcher and popularizer Carl Sagan," notes the organization's founding executive director, Tucker Hiatt. "Wonderfest's work has been dedicated to Sagan's memory ever since. Sagan would be proud to know that Matthew Walker, so renowned for his research and his outreach, has received Wonderfest's Sagan Prize for 2020."

Wonderfest is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to informal science education and popularization, particularly among adults in the San Francisco Bay Area. When pandemic constraints allow, Wonderfest produces in-person science events — and their online videos — in an effort to "enlarge the concept of scientific community." Wonderfest also produces "Science Envoy" workshops to develop the science communication skills of Bay Area PhD students.

Walker is Professor of Neuroscience and Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. He earned a degree in neuroscience from Nottingham University, UK, and a PhD in neurophysiology from the Medical Research Council, London, UK. He subsequently became a Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

Having written over 100 technical articles, Walker is globally known for his research on the impact of sleep on human health. He has received numerous funding awards from the NSF and the NIH; he is a Kavli Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences; and he is the founder and director of the Center for Human Sleep Science at UC Berkeley.

Walker is a dedicated science communicator. Known as the Sleep Diplomat, his many science popularization efforts include a CBS 60 Minutes special, a TED talk, and an NPR Hidden Brain telecast. Walker has done interviews on Science Friday, the Joe Rogan Experience, and Fresh Air with Terry Gross among many others. His book *Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams* (2019), has been translated into 34 languages, and is a New York Times bestseller.

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

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