

Ward Plummer

Brief Scientific History

On Friday December 8, 2017, LSU Board of Supervisors awarded Professor Ward Plummer the rank of Boyd Professor. Boyd professorships were established in 1953 to honor brothers David and Thomas Boyd, early faculty members and presidents of LSU. Plummer is the fourth Physics and Astronomy professor to be selected as a Boyd professor: Joe Reynolds in 1962, Joe Callaway in 1976, and Bob O’Connell in 1986. With this appointment, there are now 11 active Boyd Professors at the Flagship University.

Plummer received a number of letters of support from the dean, colleagues across campus and colleagues across the academic and research community for his nomination as Boyd Professor.

In her nomination letter for Plummer, LSU College of Science Dean Cynthia Peterson wrote, “On the basis of his exceptional career of first-rate world-class research, his outstanding preparation of our next-generation scientists and his generous service contributions to the university and the profession, I am proud to submit Dr. Plummer’s nomination as a Boyd Professor. I am proud to have such a distinguished colleague who is universally held in high regard by leading scientists around the world.”

Comments from the external evaluators included, Dr. Plummer is “the best surface scientist in the world,” who “produces the best PhD students in surface science in the world.” Another noted that “he is a true pioneer of the physics of surfaces and interfaces” and that he has the capability to “change the landscape in experimental surface physics in the US and the world.”

Nominations for the Boyd Professorship are evaluated by the LSU Boyd Professor Review Committee, which seeks confidential evaluations from distinguished scholars in the candidate’s field of expertise. Once endorsed by the review committee, the nomination is forwarded to the LSU president and Board of Supervisors for approval.



Betty and Ward with Provost Rick Koubeck at the Boyd Professor reception.