

Forest Products Society 2023 Award Winners Announced

LaGrange, GA – June 9, 2023 – The Forest Products Society, a global network for forest products professionals, announces the winners of its 2023 Annual Excellence Awards. The awards will be presented during the International Conference being held in Morgantown, WV. The winners are:



Fred W. Gottschalk Memorial Award **Nicole Stark, PhD**

The prestigious **Fred W. Gottschalk Memorial Award**, named for the first President of the Society, recognizes exceptional service to FPS by an individual member. The 2023 Gottschalk Award winner, **Nicole Stark**, has exhibited consistent commitment in serving the Forest Products Society since becoming a member.

Nicole Stark is the Project Leader of the Forest Biopolymer Science and Engineering Group at the USDA Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) in Madison, Wisconsin, USA. Her research focus is to combine forest-based resources with other polymers to develop novel composite materials. Her program includes examining the influence of raw materials and additives on natural fiber-plastic composite performance with a specific focus on developing methods to improve composite durability and development of sustainable packaging materials containing cellulose nanomaterials. Nicole obtained her B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering and her M.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She received her Ph.D. degree in Forest Science from Michigan Technological University.



Wood Engineering Achievement Award – Young Engineer **Emily Williamson, PhD**

The **Wood Engineering Achievement Award** recognizes accomplishments and innovations in the discipline of wood engineering including structures, structural elements, building codes, consensus standards, design procedures and education.

The 2023 winner of the Wood Engineering Achievement Award is **Emily Williamson**.

Emily Williamson recently graduated from the University of Utah with her Ph.D. in structural engineering. Her research focused on the design and testing of a mass timber frame with timber buckling restrained braces. Her project aimed to develop a ductile timber lateral force resisting system to promote the resilience of timber buildings during seismic events. She loves the problem solving and critical thinking involved in structural engineering and is passionate about continuing to promote the use of mass timber as a structural material as she begins working as a Project Engineer at Reaveley Engineering in Salt Lake City, Utah this fall.

Wood Award

The **Wood Award** recognizes the most outstanding graduate student research conducted in the field of wood and wood products. Wood Award papers describe original research on a wide range of topics, including but not limited to harvesting and forest operations, product development and manufacture, fundamental properties, end-use applications, and distribution and marketing. The 2023 winners are:



First Place: Yunyi Liang

Nanjing Forestry University

“Synthesis of Ultra-High Strength Structured Material from Steam-Modified Delignification of Wood”

Yunyi Liang received a B.S. degree in Wood Science and Engineering from Nanjing Forestry University, Nanjing, China, in 2020. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. candidate in wood science and technology under the supervision of Prof. Changlei Xia at Nanjing Forestry University, China. She has published over ten academic research papers, including three as the first author in the Journal of Cleaner Production, Chemosphere, and Molecules. The objectives of her research are (i) to explore the fabrication of wood-based composites by Vacuum-assisted resin transfer molding process, (ii) to investigate the application of biomass materials as controlled-release fertilize in paddy fields, and (iii) to explore the high-value utilization of biomass waste.



Second Place: Cong Chen

University of Maine

“Transparent Nanocellulose-Metal Ion Films for Food Packaging”

Cong Chen obtained her Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in Wood Science and Technology from Beijing Forestry University in China. She recently earned her Ph.D. in Forest Resources with a concentration in Bioproducts Engineering from the University of Maine, advised by Drs. Douglas J. Gardner and Jinwu Wang. Cong’s work focused on utilizing cellulose nanomaterials for sustainable food packaging films, addressing the need for eco-friendly alternatives.

L.J. Markwardt Award

Tu X. Ho, PhD



The L.J. Markwardt Award recognizes the author(s) of a **Forest Products Journal** technical paper published during the previous two years that has the most outstanding merit in the field of wood as an engineering material. This award encourages research and promotes knowledge of wood in the engineering field to enhance the efficient utilization of wood. This year, the selection was focused on Engineering Practice (Applied Research).

The 2023 winning paper is:

“Investigation of Thermal Effects on Nailed Connection of Mass Ply Panels”

Authors: Tu X. Ho, Detlef C. Laughery, Arijit Sinha

The article was published in the **Forest Products Journal**, Vol. 72, Issue 4, 2022.

Dr. Ho earned his Ph.D. degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Alabama in 2019 and worked as a postdoctoral scholar at the Department of Wood Science and Engineering, Oregon State University from Sep 2019 to Apr 2023. His research focused on mass timber materials, resiliency of the building environment and structural optimization. Dr. Ho conducted various component tests to characterize material properties of Mass ply panels (MPP) and their bracket connection, including thermal effects. In addition, he designed, modelled numerically, and tested two full scale mass timber buildings. Recently, Dr. Ho has started to work as an R&D engineer in connectors and lateral systems for Mass timber at Simpson Strong-Tie Company, Inc.

Distinguished Service Award

Justin Price



The **Distinguished Service Award** is presented to the individual who has demonstrated outstanding dedication to the Forest Products Society and biomaterials industry as a whole. The award recipient will have contributed to the society and the industry throughout their career through research, society leadership positions, and service.

Justin Price is a licensed Professional Engineer and Co-CEO of Evergreen Engineering®, Inc. He has specialized in engineering for the wood products, renewable power generation, and chemical industries for more than 25 years. His responsibilities include construction management; developing new and modified plant layouts, designing conveying systems, process equipment, and piping layouts; and preparing equipment specifications. He also patented the design for a unique screening machine with a stepped deck.

Before joining Evergreen, Justin was the Northwest Regional Engineering Manager for a privately held wood products company where he evaluated, designed, and executed manufacturing process upgrades at multiple operating facilities. He was involved in corporate-wide campaigns to incorporate new technologies. In his current role, Justin is active on the boards of wood-to-energy publications, and is a sought-after speaker for conferences and symposiums within the industry.

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ABOUT THE FOREST PRODUCTS SOCIETY

The Forest Products Society is an international, not-for-profit technical association founded in 1947 to provide an information network for all segments of the forest products industry. Its mission is to contribute to global stewardship by encouraging the social, economic and environmentally sustainable use of wood and other renewable cellulosic materials.

Membership is open to all interested individuals and organizations. Visit ForestProd.org for more information.