



In Memoriam: Frank K. Tittel

Optica and OPN mourn the loss of Optica Fellow **Frank K. Tittel**, who passed away on 17 February 2026 at age 92. Tittel was a laser pioneer and a distinguished professor at Rice University, USA, serving as the J.S. Abercrombie Professor Emeritus of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the time of his retirement. He played a pivotal role in building Rice University's thriving photonics research program during his more than 50-year career at the university, and he was a founder of the Rice Quantum Institute (now the Smalley-Curl Institute). Through his research in laser spectroscopy, Tittel became a leader in his field, developing one of the first tunable lasers, which allowed scientists to adjust wavelengths to specific frequencies—an important breakthrough.

Tittel was dedicated to serving the scientific community and held numerous volunteer positions for Optica, and he frequently attended conferences and shared the experience with his students. He will be dearly missed by his family, colleagues and former students.

Leveling Up Leadership

From 17 to 19 April, 60 early-career professionals from 14 countries gathered for the Optica Foundation's Level Up, a program designed to strengthen leadership, managerial and communication skills. The event offered workshops and presentations on topics like communicating strategically, building a strong professional network, personal effectiveness and productivity for leaders, and navigating conflict and high-stakes conversations. Attendees also participated in leadership case study workshops and built a leadership action plan.



2026–27 Congressional Science and Engineering Fellow

Optica and the Materials Research Society (MRS) have named the 2026–27 Congressional Science and Engineering Fellow: **Tahiyat Rahman**, University of Washington, USA. Rahman is a quantum researcher with a passion for science advocacy and labor justice. This one-year congressional fellowship enables Ph.D. scientists and engineers to serve as special legislative assistants for members of the US Congress or congressional committees working on federal policymaking to engage in the federal legislative process.



Rochester Spring Industrial Associates

The Institute of Optics, University of Rochester, USA, held its semiannual Industrial Associates symposium on 9 April. The 400 registrants included representatives from its more than 60 members, guest companies, faculty and students of the Institute of Optics. The program included student presentations and a poster session, faculty research snapshots and a keynote address on "The Fantastic World of Structured Light," by **Eileen Otte**, Institute of Optics.

The symposium also had participants from the Rochester's Center for Freeform Optics, Center for Visual Science, Laboratory for Laser Energetics, and Center for Extended Reality, as well as RIT's Chester Carlson Center for Imaging Science. Featured topics included reconfigurable metamaterials, hyperspectral imaging for landmine detection, AI in laser design, new orthogonal polynomials for 3D index gradients, and the design of metasurfaces for AR/VR applications.

2026 Thomas F. Deutsch Fellowship in Biomedical Optics Recipient

Maya Shor Peled, graduate of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, received the 2026 Thomas F. Deutsch Fellowship in Biomedical Optics. The Thomas F. Deutsch Fellowship in Biomedical Optics is a one-year



Peled

multidisciplinary fellowship offered in partnership with the Massachusetts General Hospital Wellman Center for Photomedicine. It fosters interactions between researchers from diverse fields of science and medicine and supports post-doctoral investigators pursuing training in either basic or clinical research. Peled's research at the Wellman Center for Photomedicine

and Harvard Medical School focuses on thin-film lithium niobate photonic technologies for compact optical coherence tomography, with the goal of improving access to early retinal disease detection.

Industry Summit on Advanced Optics at Corning

On 24 and 25 March, Optica and Corning, Inc. cohosted the the Optica Industry Summit on Advanced Optics at the Corning Museum of Glass, NY, USA. The



Keynote speaker Bernard Kress.

executive forum brought together 130 senior executives, CTOs, R&D leaders, and technology strategists to address the shift from traditional bulk optics toward compact wafer-level, diffractive, and nano-enabled optical platforms

for next-generation products. Leading participants included Corning, Google, Zeiss, ASML, Metalenz, Vuzix, Focuslight, Ansys/Synopsys, TRIOPTICS, Evatec, Pixelligent, Lumotive, and MKS Instruments.

The summit featured discussions on scalable manufacturing, advanced metrology, coatings, structured optical surfaces, new materials, AR waveguides, meta-optics and diffractive optical elements. Keynotes were given by **Federico Capasso**, Harvard University, USA; **Bernard Kress**, Google, USA; **Michael Totzeck** and **Heiko Feldmann**, Zeiss, Germany; **Rob Devlin**, Metalenz, USA; and **Barry Silverstein**, now of the University of Rochester and formerly Chief Technology Officer for Optics & Display at Meta Reality Labs, USA.



Top, left: Optica Vice President Alexander Gaeta (left) with Paola Iovanna. Right: Arjun Devraj (left) and Claudio Mazzali, Corning. Bottom: Divya Shaji (left), Munira Binte Mostafa, Besma Kalla and Claudio Mazzali, Corning.

Optica Foundation Awards at OFC

At OFC 2026 in Los Angeles, USA, the Optica Foundation recognized a number of award winners.

The Jane M. Simmons Memorial Speakership was presented to **Paola Iovanna**, Ericsson, Italy, for her invited talk "AI-Orchestrated Access Transport Networks for 6G." This speakership, which is presented annually to recognize an invited speaker at OFC, was created to honor the legacy of Jane M. Simmons and her high-impact contributions to optical network architecture, design and planning.

Besma Kalla, Eindhoven University of Technology, Netherlands; **Divya Shaji**, University of L'Aquila, Italy and **Munira Binte Mostafa**, Aston University, UK, received the Corning Women in Optical Fiber Communications Scholarship, which supports gender diversity in the optical communications industry.

Arjun Devraj, Cornell University, USA, was named winner of the Corning Outstanding Student Paper Prize. **Romulo Aparecido de Paula Junior**, University College London, UK; **Kellan Colburn**, California Institute of Technology, USA; **Samuel Hess**, ETH Zurich, Institute of Electromagnetic Fields (IEF), Switzerland; **Yanlu Huang**, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, China; and **Yuchen Yin**, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China, were finalists.

Optica Silicon Valley at OzenCon

The Optica Silicon Valley section held its hybrid winter meeting on 10 March, 2025. Optica President **James Kafka** kicked off the event with a short introduction about Optica and industry. Speakers included **Tin Komljenovic**, Nexus Inc.; **Majid Ebnali Heidari**, SimuTech; and **Neerja Aggarwal**, GLASS Imaging. The meeting also featured a panel on AI in optics R&D and production moderated by Optica senior science advisor **Tom Hausken** with panelists **Amir Atabaki**, Perceptra; **Kishor Ramaswamy**, Ansys; **Jiahui Wang**, Google X; and **Jesse Lu**, SPINS.



From left: Tom Hausken, Jesse Lu, Kishor Ramaswamy and Amir Atabaki.



Thank You, Editors

We are happy to announce the following individuals were recently appointed as new editors: *Optica*—**Xinlun Cai**, Sun Yat-sen University, China; **Reto Fiolka**, UT Southwestern Medical Center, USA; **Alexander Lvovsky**, University of Oxford, UK (as Deputy Editor). *Optics Express*—**Cuicui Lu**, Beijing Institute of Technology (as Deputy Editor). *Optics Letters*—**Robert Löw**, University of Stuttgart, Germany; **Yufei Ma**, Harbin Institute of Technology, China.

We would like to thank the following editors for agreeing to serve a second term: *Optica Quantum*—**Sonja Franke-Arnold**, University of Glasgow, UK. *Optical Materials Express*—**Li Gao**, Nanjing University of Posts & Telecommunications, China; **Lan Li**, Westlake University, China; **Francesco Micheli**, Università degli Studi di Roma “La Sapienza,” Italy; **Victor Reshetnyak**, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine.

We would like to thank the following editors, who have recently finished their terms, for their years of service: *JOCN*—**Marija Furdek**, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden. *Optical Materials Express*—**Shekhar Guha**, US Air Force Research Laboratory and University of Dayton, USA. *Optics Express*—**Maria Chekhova**, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Light, Germany; **Vittorio Passaro**, Politecnico di Bari, Italy. *Optics Letters*—**Tatiana Alieva**, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain.

Stanford University Photonics Retreat

The 2026 Stanford University Photonics Retreat (SUPR) took place from 10 to 12 April in Pacific Grove, CA, USA. This annual event, hosted by the Stanford Optical Society, the local student chapter of both Optica and SPIE, is intended to promote greater interaction within the Stanford optics and photonics research community. This year's retreat featured talks, poster sessions and networking opportunities. 2012 Optica President **Tony Heinz** gave an invited talk, and a keynote was given by **Harry Atwater**, California University of Technology, USA.



Women in Optics Reception

Optica hosted a Women in Optics Reception on 25 April at the Optica Biophotonics Congress, which was held from 26 to 29 April in Fort Lauderdale, FL, USA. This event brought together researchers, engineers, industry professionals and students to connect, share experiences and celebrate the contributions of women advancing the field of optics and photonics. Attendees enjoyed networking and engaging with the growing global community of women in optics.



Optica Events

Optica Digital Holography and Three-Dimensional Imaging Topical Meeting

01 – 04 June 2026
Taipei City, Taiwan

Optica.org/DH

Optica Online Industry Meeting: Photonics in Energy

02 June 2026

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica Global Advanced Manufacturing Alliance

02 – 03 June 2026
Brussels, Belgium

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica Quantum 2.0 Conference and Exhibition

15 – 18 June 2026
Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Optica.org/QuantumConference

Optica Quantum Industry Summit – Fifth Edition

16 – 17 June 2026
Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica Online Industry Meeting: 3D Sensing

23 June 2026

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica ImageSense Congress

12 – 17 July 2026
Maastricht, Netherlands

Optica.org/ImageSense

Optica Advanced Photonics Congress

26 – 30 July 2026
Long Beach, CA, USA

Optica.org/Photonics

Optica Online Industry Meeting: Photonics in Ophthalmology & Vision Care

25 August 2026

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica Online Industry Meeting: Applied Imaging

15 September 2026

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica Global Photonics Economic Forum

24 – 25 September 2026
Málaga, Spain

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Frontiers in Optics + Laser Science Conference and Exhibition

Cosponsored by the American Physical Society and Optica

27 September – 01 October 2026
Rochester, NY, USA

FrontiersInOptics.org

Optica Online Industry Meeting: Aerospace

29 September 2026

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica Laser Congress and Exhibition

11 – 15 October 2026
Vilnius, Lithuania

Optica.org/Laser

Optica Online Industry Meeting: Quantum-Safe Networks

13 October 2026

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

PECC Summit – Optica+APC Photonic-Enabled Cloud Computing Summit

20 – 21 October 2026

Sunnyvale, California, USA

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica Online Industry Meeting: XR

27 October 2026

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica Latin America Optics and Photonics Conference

09 – 12 November 2026

Bogotá, Colombia

Optica.org/LAOP

Optica Online Industry Meeting: New Space

17 November 2026

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica Online Industry Meeting: Quantum Computing

08 December 2026

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Optica Industry Summit on Aerospace and Defense hosted by Exail at iXcampus

09 – 10 December 2026

Exail at iXcampus, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

Optica.org/IndustryEvents

Thank You, Meeting Chairs

Thank you to the chairs of the Optica Digital Holography and Three-Dimensional Imaging Topical Meeting and the Optica Quantum 2.0 Conference and Exhibition.

Meeting Chairs of the Optica Digital Holography and Three-Dimensional Imaging Topical Meeting: **Yuan Luo**, National Taiwan University, Taiwan (General Chair and Local Host); **Tatiana Latychevskaia**, Paul Scherrer Institut, Switzerland (General Chair); **Malgorzata Kujawska**, Politechnika Warszawska, Poland (Program Chair); **Naveen Kumar Nishchal**, Indian Institute of Technology Patna, India (Program Chair).

Meeting Chairs of the Optica Quantum 2.0 Conference and Exhibition: **Eden Figueroa**, Stony Brook University, USA (Chair); **Hugues de Riedmatten**, ICFO - The Institute of Photonic Sciences, Spain (Chair); **Heike Riel**, IBM Research Zurich, Switzerland (Chair); **Christopher Eichler**, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany (Chair); **Brian Smith**, University of Oregon, USA (Chair).

Receive notifications about meetings of interest, including reminders for calls for papers and registration.

Optica.org/focus