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For Immediate Release

### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **The 2017 Pinch Medal Awarded to Dr. Peter Tarassoff**

The 2017 Pinch Medal has been awarded to Dr. Peter Tarassoff who was born in Montreal, Canada, in 1934. He holds a bachelor degree in metallurgical engineering from McGill University and a doctorate in chemical metallurgy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

He first became interested in minerals at the age of 10 and took an introductory course in geology at the young age of 12. His interest was encouraged by his parents, teachers and a Boy Scout leader. He soon discovered the mineral collection at the Redpath Museum at McGill University which further developed his interest and knowledge in systematic mineralogy. It is at this time that Peter began to amass what is now a large, systematic collection with an emphasis on minerals from alkaline rocks. As an undergraduate student in 1953, Peter had the opportunity to work for the Geological Survey of Canada in the Yukon Territory which resulted in a mineralogical term paper and a dynamite-box of mineral specimens. Peter was further introduced to the New England pegmatites by members of the Boston Mineral Club while he was a graduate student at MIT.

Peter's professional career was in research and development in Canada's mining and metallurgical industry. Upon returning to Canada he worked as a research engineer with the Québec Iron and Titanium Corporation in Sorel, Québec for two years, and spent the rest of his career with the Noranda Research Centre, of Noranda Inc., a major Canadian mining and natural resource company. At the time of his retirement in 1991, he was Vice President and Chief Scientist.

Peter began to explore and collect at some of Canada's most important localities. In 1962, he discovered the Saint-Amable alkaline sill (Demix-Varenes quarry), first visited the now world-famous site of Mont Saint-Hilaire in 1963 and has been collecting there continuously until the present day. After his retirement, Peter turned his energies towards mineralogy and ornithology.

Peter has made it his life-long goal to document the geology and mineralogy of Mont Saint-Hilaire - he has committed the last 50 years of his life to this endeavor, longer than that of any known collector. Of the >400 mineral species found at MSH, Peter has been the first person to identify at least 35 of these species. In addition, his collecting and subsequent examinations have resulted in him discovering 12 new species from not only MSH but other alkaline localities. Considered to be "the dean" of Mont Saint-Hilaire mineral collectors for his long and sustained contributions to Mont Saint-Hilaire mineralogy, Peter was honored with having the new species, petarasite, named after him in 1980 by George Y. Chao, T. T. Chen, and J. Baker.

Peter's dedication to systematic collecting, curating of his own collection, and keeping and maintaining an archive of accurate, detailed historical and scientific information has been of great benefit to the mineral sciences community in Canada and world-wide. Researchers have benefitted from his generosity in providing specimens and information for their studies. Peter has also authored or co-



authored many articles in scientific and popular mineralogical publications. Peter has been a member of the Mineralogical Association of Canada since 1964, and was a member of the Mineralogical Society of America for more than 30 years.

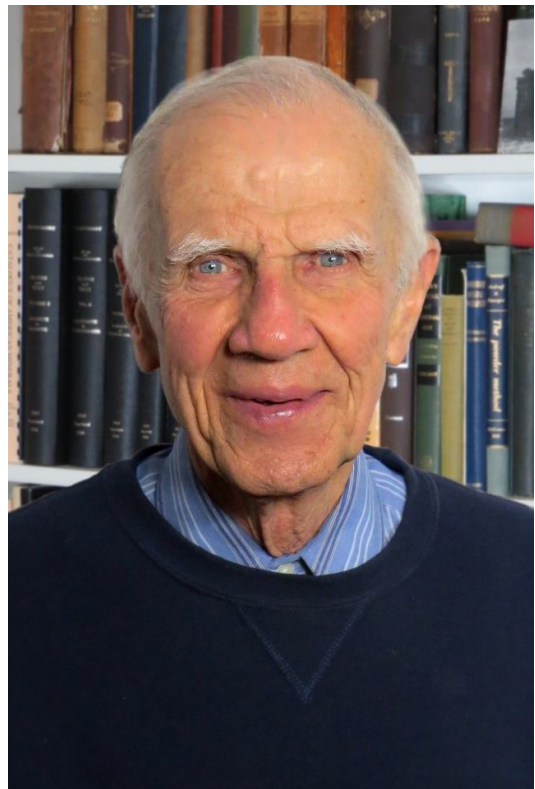
In addition to providing to the scientific community, 14 years ago Peter returned to his roots to work as a volunteer at the Redpath Museum where he has helped to completely renew the mineral exhibits, reorganize the mineral collection, and has written a scientific guide to the mineral gallery. He is an associate at the museum with the title of Honorary Curator of Mineralogy. Peter knows where his passion for the minerals sciences began and he is doing his utmost to ensure that the next generation has the same opportunities that he did.

The Pinch Medal recognizes major and sustained contributions to the advancement of mineralogy by members of the collector-dealer community. The Mineralogical Association of Canada is honored to present Dr. Peter Tarassoff with this award as he is the true embodiment of what it means to be a professional amateur in the minerals sciences. His legacy, spanning more than five decades, will serve as inspiration for future generations. The Pinch Medal is given out on a bi-annual basis and will be presented at the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show Banquet on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

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*Dr. Peter Tarassoff*