



Robert Curl

Chemist

Robert Curl (born August 23, 1933) is a University Professor Emeritus, Pitzer-Schlumberger Professor of Natural Sciences Emeritus, and Professor of Chemistry Emeritus at Rice University. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1996 for the discovery of the nanomaterial buckminsterfullerene, along with Richard Smalley (also of Rice University) and Harold Kroto of the University of Sussex.

Carbon is an element that can assume a number of different forms. In nature, for example, graphite and diamonds appear. In 1985 Robert Curl, Richard Smalley and Harold Kroto irradiated a surface of graphite with laser pulses so that carbon gas was formed. When the carbon gas condensed, previously unknown structures with 60 and 70 carbon atoms were formed. The most common structure had 60 carbon atoms arranged in a sphere with five and six edges. The structures were called fullerenes in honor of architect Buckminster Fuller, who worked with this geometric shape

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