

Acceptance speech by M. Cuney:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has been a great surprise when Pär announced me that I had been chosen to receive such a prestigious award: the SGA Newmont gold medal.

It has also been a great pleasure not only for me but for the recognition of all the work that had been done in Nancy for the past years on the genesis of uranium deposits.

A great surprise: because uranium, despite its high density represents a “very light metal” in the mineral resource economy and in scientific research compared to the “heavy metals” like gold, which attract about 40% of the exploration geologists and budgets.

A great surprise: also because during, about past 20 years I felt quite lonely in the field of uranium geochemistry and metallogenesis. My colleagues and friends were asking me “why are you still working on uranium, there is no future in this field?” Even a top manager of AREVA told me in 2005 “Michel ! ! ! you are still working on uranium, you won’t see a new start of this business before your retirement. It is still time to change your research subjects”! Two years later, in July 2007, the uranium price rose to 135\$/pound from about 10\$ in 2004!

It is also a great pleasure, because I feel somehow reassured that the research I have worked on for the past 40 years have some interest for the geological community.

But, the greatest pleasure to receive this extraordinary award is the recognition of the huge fundamental and applied research work, which has been produced in Nancy for more than a half century. The uranium story in Nancy started in 1948 when the Nobel Prize Frederic Joliot Curie nominated Marcel Roubault - the Director of the Nancy School of Geology – uranium exploration and production manager at the French Atomic Energy Commission. Four years later, the first uranium mine was producing in the France.

Since then, Nancy has always kept very tight relations with the mining companies involved in U exploration from France (COGEMA, AREVA, TOTAL Mines, SNEAP, ...) and other countries (CAMECO, RIO TINTO, ANGLO AMERICAN ...). A tremendous rise in the research capabilities on uranium metallogenesis occurred with the creation of the CREGU (Centre de Recherche sur la Géologie de l’Uranium) in 1978 after the first oil crisis, a creation initiated by Valéry Ziegler from the French Atomic Energy Commission, with Hubert de la Roche and Bernard Poty from the CNRS and a young team composed of Maurice Pagel, Jacques Leroy and myself. At that time it was a rather unique interface between the scientific research and the exploration companies. It has been a great opportunity for my career.

Many geologists educated at Nancy have been involved in the discovery of numerous important uranium deposits in France and throughout the World. They have also largely contributed to a better understanding of uranium ore forming processes and uranium – thorium geochemistry with famous names such as Bernard Poty, Jacques Leroy, Maurice Pagel, Michel Cathelineau, Nguyen Trung Chinh, Patrick Landais, Jean Dubessy and others.

I also would like to use this opportunity to thank all of them, together with the Master and PhD students I have supervised as well as the numerous geologists of the mining companies (Valéry Ziegler, Marcel Moreau, André Durandau, Patrice Bruneton, Claude Caillat, among many others), which offered me new research opportunities, access to their mines and exploration fields, stimulating discussions, and to the colleagues all over the world with which collaborations have been developed. I also have to present all my respects to the memory of Frantz Dahlkamp, which died this spring, for his friendship, and his prodigious contribution to the knowledge of world uranium deposits. Last but not least I would like to thank my family and especially my wife Liliane, which has been essential in this adventure. They could all claim a part of this medal. I sincerely thank the SGA colleagues and the company Newmont for choosing me for receiving the prestigious SGA-Newmont Gold Medal.