July 31, 2018

Dear Fellow Selection Committee Members,

With this letter, I would like to nominate Dr, Zacharius Agioutantis for the 2019 SME *Syd S. and Felecia F. Peng Ground Control in Mining Award.* Accordingly, I have provided a short bio, short CV, and abbreviated bibliography for the Committee's review. I think that you will find and agree that Dr. Agioutantis' (Zach's) credentials are certainly worthy of this outstanding and prestigious award.

After receiving his Ph.D. from the Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Zach moved back to his home country of Greece, where he eventually became Professor and Head of the Department of Mineral Resources Engineering at the Technical University of Crete (TUC). During his 25-year tenure with TUC, he also served as Director of the Geology, Rock Mechanics, and Computer Laboratories, and participated in over 34 Greek, U.S. and E.U. research projects either as PI or co-PI. While at TUC, and in conjunction with Virginia Tech and the University of Aachen, he also developed a conference series regarding "Sustainable Development for the Minerals Industry". In 2014, Zach relocated to the U.S, and is now the Mining Engineering Foundation Professor and Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Mining Engineering at the University of Kentucky (UK). He is currently the PI for 10 funded projects.

During his career, Zach has been an exceptionally prolific researcher and writer, authoring or coauthoring three books and over 300 conference papers. Many of these papers were delivered at U.S. mining conferences, including 15 papers at ICGCM and 10 papers at the Annual SME Conference, most dealing with coal mining ground control and mining subsidence.

Two of Zach's most notable accomplishments, particularly within the U.S., involve the development of user-friendly computer applications for mining engineers and the ground control community, including: SDPS, a stand-alone commercially-available software package for use in ground control and subsidence engineering; and the suite of freely-distributed Windows-based software for NIOSH-developed ground control engineering tools, including ALPs, ARMPS, AMSS. In addition, in conjunction with Dr. Christopher Mark, Zach has recently developed a beta version of ACPS, a package which enhances and integrates the aforementioned NIOSH software. Both SDPS and the NIOSH software packages are universally recognized within the ground control community, and are utilized across the spectrum by operators, regulators, academia, and researchers.

On a personal note, I have known Zach for over 36 years, since our graduate school days in Mining Engineering at Virginia Tech, and have found him to be one of the most capable, passionate, and energetic professional colleagues that I have had the honor to work and interact with. Even as a young graduate student, Zach stood out. On more than one occasion, he was called upon to lead classes, not just to undergraduates, but graduates alike. At the stage when most of us were only a few years beyond Fortran and punch cards, Zach was lecturing on personal computing and the digital future for mining engineering. As recently suggested by Chris Mark in the 2018 International Conference on Ground in Mining (ICGCM), and I paraphrase, 'no one will out work Zach'. I would have to agree, and struggle to remember the number of times that I received a response email from him sent from Greece well after midnight or before 6:00 am.

Futhermore, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Zach is an extremely high integrity individual. In particular, I have found him to be trustworthy, honest, and humble; always willing to share the spotlight, even when he carries the load. These traits show time and again throughout his career.

In closure, I hope that you have the opportunity to review Zach's credentials in detail and consider him as a viable candidate for the 2019 Ground Control in Mining award. If you require any further information or details, please advise.

With best regards,

Greg Hasenfus