

Brazilian Belita Koiller Gets UNESCO Prize for Science

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Brazilian physicist, Belita Koiller, received, in Paris, France, one of the five prizes awarded by UNESCO (United Nations Education, Science, and Culture Organization) and the international cosmetics firm, L'Oréal, to promote the role of women in science.

Koiller, full professor of Physics at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, received US\$ 100 thousand for her theoretical research on electrons in disordered settings such as glass.

Koiller is the third Brazilian to receive the principal prize, after Mayana Zatz, a genetics specialist (2001), and the biochemist Lúcia Mendonça Previato (2004).

Since 1985 she has done research for the National Council of Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), and she was the first female physicist inducted into the Brazilian Academy of Sciences.

Koiller is a renowned thesis adviser and was awarded the National Order of Scientific Merit in 2002.

The other recipients of the UNESCO prize were Zohra Ben Lajdar, from Tunisia, Myriam P. Sarachik, from the United States, Fumiko Yonezawa, from Japan, and Dominique Langevin, from France.

The 2005 edition of the prize coincides with the International Year of Physics; for this reason, precedence was given to research in this field, in which "women are insufficiently represented," according to UNESCO.

According to information provided by the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, the prizes went to the most promising areas in Physics, such as nanoscience and quantum physics.

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