Joan E. Yater received the A.B. degree in physics from Cornell University in 1982 and the Ph.D. degree in physics from the University of Texas at Austin in 1992. In 1993, she joined the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, DC as a National Research Council postdoctoral fellow, and in 1995 she became a Research Physicist in the Electronics Science and Technology Division. In her research, she has used her background in surface science and electron spectroscopy to study the electron emission properties of electron sources for vacuum electronic device applications. Her research areas have included secondary emission, photoemission, and thermionic emission, and her studies have particularly focused on wide bandgap materials for cold emission and current amplification applications. She is a member of the American Physical Society and Materials Research Society, and she serves on the International Steering Committee of the International Vacuum Electron Sources Conference.