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ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The American Geosciences Institute (AGI) is pleased to recognize Dr. J. Marshall Shepherd, Georgia Athletic Association Distinguished Professor of Atmospheric Sciences and Geography at the University of Georgia (UGA) in Athens, Georgia, as the 2021 recipient of the AGI Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Public Understanding of the Geosciences.

Dr. Shepherd is well known for his hosting of the Weather Channel show "Weather Geeks" since 2014 and the associated podcast since 2018. Through interviews with key figures in weather, climate, and related fields, Dr. Shepherd explores fundamental issues in the geosciences without minimizing the complexities that make the Earth system so fascinating. He additionally provides an opportunity for a diverse array of those doing research and applications to show their excitement for their work.

Also noteworthy is Dr. Shepherd's regular column in Forbes Magazine online exploring topics in weather and climate. As in Weather Geeks, a common theme is the way science impacts everyone's daily lives, from computer simulations that provide useful warnings of impending storms to the impact of climate change on the price of breakfast cereal. Dr. Shepherd repeatedly — in Weather Geeks, Forbes Magazine, and his much-viewed TED Talks — has confronted popular misconceptions about science. His recent TED Talk on bias in science is nearing 3 million views, and he coined the term "zombie theories" for challenges to established climate science that persist despite having been proven incorrect.

For these and other contributions, Dr. Shepherd has received recognitions including the Captain Planet Foundation's Protector of the Earth Award (2014), the American Geophysical Union's Climate Communication Prize (2019), the AAAS Award for Public Engagement (2020), and the National Center for Science Education's Friend of the Planet Award (2021).

In addition to his professorship, Dr. Shepherd is Director of the UGA Atmospheric Sciences Program and Associate Director of Climate and Outreach for the Institute for Resilient Infrastructure Systems at UGA. He is the only person in the history of the University of Georgia to be elected to the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Previously he was a research meteorologist at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. Dr. Shepherd has served in a various leadership and advisory roles in scientific societies, including as president of the American Meteorological Society in 2013. An AGI Minority Participation Program scholarship recipient, he earned his bachelor's degree, master's degree, and Ph.D. in meteorology from the Florida State University.

"I am honored to be recognized by AGI," Dr. Shepherd said on receiving the award. "I have dedicated much of my career to conducting and communicating science. This feels like a 'full circle' moment given AGI's initial support of my early collegiate education."

The AGI award is presented to a person, organization, or institution in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the public understanding of the geosciences.

About AGI

The American Geosciences Institute (AGI), a federation of scientific and professional associations representing over a quarter-million geoscientists, is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to serving the geoscience community and addressing the needs of society. AGI headquarters are in Alexandria, Virginia.

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