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The Geoscience Community Honors the Man Who shook up Earthquake Science

Alexandria, VA—The American Geosciences Institute is honoring one of the scientists who advanced earthquake hazards preparedness and mitigation in the U.S. by his superlative service to the earth sciences. This year's recipient of the Ian Campbell Medal, Dr. James "Jim" Davis, is one of the key scientists behind U.S. earthquake hazards and loss reduction policy as it is known today. He also has helped to shape how geoscientists communicate with the public to help people better understand the seismic environment they live in. Davis has been a State Geologist of not one, but two states, and has the distinction of being the longest serving State Geologist in California history; a tradition started in 1850.

His career started in New York with the New York State Geological Survey. There, he demonstrated the importance of using geology and seismology in siting of nuclear power plants and nuclear waste-disposal facilities, as well as publishing reports detailing mineral resources, developing geologic standards for a variety of environmental quality applications and creating the Northeastern US Seismic Monitoring Network.

Davis' successes made him a candidate for the California State Geologist position which was vacant. He has been a strong advocate for expanding modern seismic monitoring systems as a tool for assessing regional earthquake vulnerability enabling structural engineers to design structures that are more earthquake resistant. Emergency responders can also better evaluate post-earthquake needs. He oversaw the implementation of the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act in California which has resulted in high-resolution geologic mapping of faults, liquefaction-, and land-hazard susceptibility maps. Following the Northridge Earthquake in 1994, he accelerated seismic safety reviews of new public school construction and hospital upgrade construction designs.

Davis has taken every opportunity in his career to apply a robust knowledge of geoscience to creating legislation to protect Americans, and his techniques have been replicated globally. He is a Past-President of AGI, and his work continues with leadership positions at AGI member organization, the Geological Society of America and his colleagues continue to laud him for "strengthen, good character, and a willingness to listen to others." He has been recognized by AGI member organization the Association of American State Geologists, the Consortium of Strong-Motion Operating Systems (COSMOS) and was awarded the University of Wisconsin Geoscientist Distinguished Alumni Award in 2008. AGI thanks Davis for his monumental contributions to geoscience and public policy.

The Ian Campbell Medal is given in recognition of singular performance in and contribution to the profession of geology. Candidates are measured against the distinguished career of Ian Campbell, whose service to the profession touched virtually every facet of the geosciences. Campbell was a most uncommon man of remarkable accomplishment and widespread influence. In his career as a geologist, educator, administrator, and public servant, he was noted for his candor and integrity. The title of the award was changed for the 2009 award to add "for Superlative Service to the Geosciences" in order to emphasize the importance of service shown by the recipient.

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The American Geosciences Institute (AGI) is the global leader in geoscience information. AGI is a nonprofit federation of 49 geoscientific and professional associations that represents more than 250,000 geologists, geophysicists and other earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in the profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of resources, resiliency to natural hazards, and interaction with the environment.