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2009 Ian Campbell Medalist

RESPONSE TO CITATION FOR THE IAN CAMPBELL MEDAL

(given on October 17, 2009, at the
GSA Presidential Awards Ceremony at the
Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon)



I thank Jamie [Jamie Robertson] for his citation and the AGI nomination committee and Member Society Council for selecting me. It is a great honor to be recognized for contributions to the profession, because the medal demonstrates, at least for me, that geology is tremendously fun.

I started having fun with geology at about the age of five, while collecting brachiopods and crinoids in Devonian siltstones on our farm in Pennsylvania. My parents gave me plenty of support (for example, by getting my best fossils identified by the Smithsonian, which, by the way, never returned them; and by working hard to save enough money to send me to a college with a strong geology program). Connections at Lehigh University led to meeting Beth, who has been my spouse, scientific advisor (particularly in chemistry, physics, and biology), bridge partner, exercise coach, co-volunteer with the Red Cross and USA Track and Field, and best friend for 37 years. While I was having fun with field work, Beth handled raising our two children. I'm not disappointed that neither child became a geologist (despite giving them many minerals for holiday presents and taking them underground in a mercury mine at the ages of two and four); Alexander is an engineer, and Argenta is a biochemist.

My professional career developed as a series of coincidences. Had my public high school not offered two years of Latin and four years of German, and had Lehigh not had a third-year language requirement for geology majors, I probably wouldn't have double majored in geology and German or spent a post-graduation year at the University of Heidelberg. Had that university not had such a strong program in economic geology (where I learned from professors Ramdohr, Amstutz, and Harvard visiting professor Petersen), I would have probably focused on igneous petrology and geochemistry at Berkeley (where professors Carmichael, Helgeson, Wenk, Verhoogen, and Bolt nonetheless influenced my approaches to geology). Had Chuck Meyer not suggested that I pursue a dissertation on a Nevada mine, and had he not pushed me to work in industry upon graduation, I would probably not have gone to work for U.S. Steel Corporation. Had ARCO not acquired Anaconda, causing the federal government to worry about a monopoly of the domestic uranium-mining industry, U.S. Steel probably would not have transferred me to South Texas. Had work there not led to a research job at the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, where Ian Campbell Medalist Bill Fisher was an outstanding mentor, I probably would

not have been qualified to return to Nevada to become the State Geologist, truly an ideal job for me. Had Bill not urged me to accept a two-year assignment with the National Research Council, I probably would not have gained the necessary insight to better serve a state in which 87% of the land is managed by the federal government.

Working with a thoroughly professional and competent support staff and an excellent scientific crew at the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology has been fun. Terri Garside has been our executive assistant during much of my service as State Geologist; her attention to details, knowledge, and work ethic have helped on many fronts. Nevada's geology has given me many opportunities to learn, and it has been fun to see our scientific staff make significant strides in understanding the origin of world-class gold deposits; unraveling the tectonic history of the Cordillera; reducing risks from earthquakes through a combination of geological research, interaction with emergency managers, and outreach to the public; applying space geodesy to issues of earthquake, volcano, and tsunami hazards and climate change; expanding geothermal production through applied research and outreach to industry; and educating the public about geology. Even Yucca Mountain and Area 51 have had their fun aspects.

It has been great fun serving scientific and professional organizations, including several member societies of AGI. My supervisors at the University of Nevada, Reno have supported my helping AIPG, SEG, AASG, GSA, SME, AEG, and others. Some of the most fun has been with organizations such as the Western States Seismic Policy Council and the Nevada Earthquake Safety Council, which bring scientists, engineers, emergency managers, insurance experts, social scientists, and others together for the public good.

One of the attractions of moving to Reno was the fact that the Geological Society of Nevada holds monthly dinners with technical talks, two major field trips per year, and a symposium once every five years. As do most successful volunteer organizations, GSN recognizes that you volunteer because you enjoy the work. It has been great working in a state in which so many geologists volunteer their time and skills to documenting the local geology – a function that otherwise falls on the shoulders of the state geological survey. I was particularly pleased to demonstrate the value of GSN's (and the Nevada Petroleum Society's) contributions to the geology of Nevada by giving them office and storage space in our new building, which was an outgrowth of concerted efforts of AGI, the National Research Council, AASG, and others to focus national attention on the need for geoscience sample and data preservation.

I have had the pleasure of working with 21 Ian Campbell Medalists, mostly as volunteers for various geoscience organizations, and it is a true honor to be part of this group. Several of us, led by Charlie Mankin, the 1987 recipient, helped promote geologic mapping – one of the most fun and rewarding endeavors any field geologist can pursue. Sam Adams, the 2005 Medalist, was the recipient with whom I had the longest and most fun experiences – starting with his leading a tour for Berkeley grad students at a mine in New Mexico, hatching the ideas for Earth Science Week with Susan Landon and other volunteers for AGI, stimulating debates about mining on federal lands and support for the USGS during National Research Council studies, and welcoming our family to be part of his and Nancy's extended family in New England and Nevada. Throughout his career Sam demonstrated, as did Ian Campbell, that geology is tremendously fun. I know that message will endure. Thank you.