

# 2009 MEDALS & AWARDS

## INTERNATIONAL DIVISION DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARD

Presented to **Yildirim Dilek**



Yildirim Dilek  
The Miami University

### *Citation by Paul T. Robinson*

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2009 GSA International Division Distinguished Career Award to Professor Yildirim Dilek of Miami University. This award is meant to recognize individuals who have made numerous, significant contributions to the advancement of Earth Sciences and who have provided extraordinary service to the GSA and to the international community at large.

Professor Dilek has succeeded admirably in both areas. He has had a long career as a distinguished scientist whose speciality is the origin and tectonic significance of ophiolites and oceanic crust. He has published more than 100 major papers directly related to ophiolite genesis and is considered one of the leading ophiolite specialists in the world. Just a few of his major contributions include a new classification of ophiolites, elucidation of the role played by arc-trench rollback in ophiolite formation, recognition of Archean oceanic crust in greenstone belts and the role of ophiolites in the geodynamic development of the Alpine-Himalayan, Cordilleran, and Caledonian orogenic belts. In addition, he has contributed significantly to our understanding of mantle dynamics and crustal evolution in both collisional and extensional tectonic environments through his original research,

particularly in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions. The breadth and significance of Professor Dilek's scientific contributions are quite remarkable.

In addition to his many scientific contributions, Professor Dilek has an unmatched record of service to the national and international geoscience communities. He has served as Editor or Associate Editor of many world-class journals, including the GSA Bulletin and Geology. In his editorial capacity Yildirim provided opportunities for international scientists, particularly those from developing countries, to publish their science in the mainstream international literature. In addition, he has convened many excellent symposia and special sessions on contemporary topics at numerous international meetings, and has organized the contributions from these meetings into important thematic volumes and edited books. These publications have received excellent reviews, and are widely read and cited. Yildirim has made the annual meetings of the Geological Society of America truly diverse and international by inviting many top scientists and young researchers from around the world to his sessions and symposia, and by obtaining funds and travel grants allowing them to participate.

Yildirim's contributions to GSA include serving as President of the International Division and the History of Geology Division, as a member of the Publications Committee, Chair of the Penrose Committee, and many others. He is currently the USA representative on the UNESCO Scientific Board and the International Geological Correlation Program (IGCP), and is a member of the US Science Advisory Committee (USAC) on Scientific Ocean Drilling.

Yildirim's many scientific and service contributions have already been widely recognized. For example, in 2002 he was elected a Fellow of the GSA, in 2007 he was awarded the GSA Distinguished Service Award for "*outstanding scientific and editorial contributions to the international earth sciences community*," and in 2008 he received the Neil Minor award of the National Association of Geoscientists (NAGT) for "*exceptional contributions to the stimulation of interest in the earth sciences*." He is a Distinguished Professor of Geology at Miami University.

For his many scientific and service contributions, Yildirim is a most worthy recipient of the 2009 International Division Distinguished Career Award of the Geological Society of America.

### *Citation by John Wakabayashi*

Paul, it is a great pleasure for me to be able to help honor Yildirim's enormous contributions in science and service which you have detailed so well. I wish to give a personal perspective that illustrates just how deserving Yildirim is of this award. From when I first met Yildirim as a fellow graduate student at UC Davis, it was clear that Yildirim had the talent and drive to accomplish exceptional things. As our friendship continued over the years I hoped, perhaps daydreamed, that I might someday be in a position to honor him as a citationist for a major award such as this.

In many ways I see this not only as a chance to give recognition to Yildirim's great achievements, but also, to say "thank you", and I believe that when I say "thank you" I am speaking on behalf of so many geoscientists around the world and in this room. There a huge part of Yildirim's contributions that is not so much part of the written record. He has helped so many geoscientists around the world get their research publicized and published that might otherwise have languished. I am one of those individuals. Whether by direct collaboration, invitations to conferences and symposia, invitations to submit papers to special volumes that he edited, or just plain encouragement, Yildirim has provided opportunities for us.

As many of you (and me) have experienced, he has also helped get many involved in service, and my own involvement with the International Division/Section, and with GSA in general, is a result of Yildirim's efforts. In all of his endeavors, Yildirim has had a strong international flair to his networking, for it is hard to find a country that Yildirim has not connected with researchers. A part of his bringing together researchers from other countries is that he has always reminded North Americans about the work of those in the international community that they might overlook.

Finally, I think it is safe to say that much of Yildirim's building of international bridges has been aided by his vibrant personality, sense of humor, and the friendship he has extended to so many. His company at conferences and in the field has certainly made those experiences more enjoyable and memorable for me and for so many of us. So I think I speak on behalf of many of you when I say to Yildirim: "Congratulations for a honor well deserved" and follow it with an emphatic "Thank you Yildirim, for all that you've done for and given to us".

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### **Response by Yildirim Dilek**

Thank you, Paul and John, for your warm and generous citation. It is a great honour to receive the Distinguished Career Award of the GSA International Division, and I thank my nominators, colleagues and the Society for this tribute. Receiving this award is especially meaningful to me as an international scientist, in the company of those geological giants that were past recipients of this recognition.

I was fortunate to encounter great teachers and mentors, such as Yücel Yilmaz, who introduced me to the ophiolite concept in my undergraduate years; Eldridge Moores, whose extraordinary intellect and exuberant personality inspired me in graduate school and remains an inspiration today; Paul Robinson, who has always reminded me that ophiolite research and life in itself without tantalizing geochemical work would be not so complete; Harald Furnes, who has shown me how stimulating and exciting fieldwork would be in the cold Nordic fjords; and Yujiro Ogawa, who introduced me to the fascinating geology of the Japanese islands and the Nankai Trough. I met John Wakabayashi and Peter Thy while in graduate school at the University

of California (Davis), who provided much animated discussions and exciting ideas on a variety of topics that eventually made into our joint publications, as well as good times and fun in the field. I have been privileged to have the opportunity to work with all these colleagues over the years, and it is a real pleasure to me that most of them are here this evening.

I have enjoyed incredible freedom to explore a wide range of subjects, all driven by curiosity, love for being outdoors, and international connections. I am extremely lucky to have the unique experience of working in many countries and continents, and to develop most productive collaborations and deep friendships with many people from around the world. My involvement with the Geological Society of America has brought wonderful professional opportunities and more international experience. Throughout my tenure as the *GSA Bulletin* Editor and as the Divisional officer I have made every effort to ensure that GSA reach out to the international community to promote international science and endeavors, and to become an international leader in our profession well beyond the

confines of North America. I am proud to say that GSA is more global nowadays than ever, and this is in part due to the collective and effective efforts of those colleagues, who have been actively engaged in the International Division governance and activities. But, we still have a long way to go in order to make the GSA the foremost, global society of Earth scientists in the world.

I am here today to receive this award because of the fruitful collaborations of so many international colleagues, the ample support of Miami University and my students there, and the unconditional support and encouragement of my family throughout my education and career. My family's love and support have always been the pillars underlying my scientific and professional accomplishments. I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all of them in accepting this award.

I thank the Geological Society of America again for this great recognition and my colleagues for their support, and I gratefully accept the Distinguished Career Award of the International Division.