

2010 MEDALS & AWARDS

GSA PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Presented to **Jonathan G. Price**



Jonathan G. Price
*University of Nevada and
Nevada Bureau of Mines & Geology*

Citation by Stephen M. Testa

I am deeply honored to have this opportunity to share a few words with you in recognizing and celebrating Jon Price as this year's recipient of the GSA Public Service Award. To provide some foundation, Jon's academic credentials are exceptional, with expertise in geology and geochemistry of ore deposits, igneous petrology, aqueous and environmental geochemistry, solution mining and geologic hazards, and public policy. Jon received his B.A. in Geology and German from Lehigh University in 1972, with highest honors, and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley in 1975 and 1977, respectively. Jon spent his early professional career working as a geologist for The Anaconda Company in Nevada and later with the United States Steel Corporation in Corpus Christi, Texas, and as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. Jon began his state survey work in 1981 with the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin, and in 1988, his professional career would undergo a significant change when he accepted the position of State Geologist and Director of the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology (NBMG).

Jon has served in the capacity of State Geologist since 1988, during which time he took a short intermission being on loan to the National Research Council from February 1993 to February 1995. For those

not familiar with the National Research Council, a unit of the National Academy of Sciences, this council primarily advises the federal government on science issues, use of science and technology in society, and policy. The Board on Earth Sciences and Resources addresses issues relating to solid earth sciences and to natural resources such as petroleum and minerals. During Jon's two-year involvement, eighteen reports would be released.

Public service can take many forms, but it's not uncommon for recognition of public service to be granted to a state geologist, but Jon is unique among state geologists. Public service is what serving in the capacity of a State Geologist and Director of a geological survey is all about; however, with exceptional academic credentials, he brought his deep seated core understanding that public service is fundamental to what geoscientists do. For those that venture into the arena of public policy he recognized early on that this area of our science can have profound impact in fulfilling essential societal needs and improving the quality of life for us all. Jon has throughout his career been persistent and unrelenting in his pursuit to address societal and public policy issues related to mineral resources, geologic hazards and professionalism. Jon's outreach and mentoring efforts in developing sound policy have extended to federal and state government, academic institutions, industry, professional societies, local geologic clubs and societies, and communities through such venues as the American Red Cross and Habitat for Humanity. There has been no venue in which Jon has not shown a desire to reach out and engage the public about the role of geology in their lives. Despite his busy life, he remains accessible to colleagues, staff, friends, and family, while constantly pursuing avenues to provide visibility for NBMG and to explore new opportunities for NBMG to better serve the public.

What is truly striking, however, is his behind-the-scenes work and contributions on countless committees, teacher workshops, elementary and secondary science school fairs and field trips. Committee work is not commonly characterized as glamorous work, and for the most part it is simply work; much of it is not readily recognized or visible. In roles of Committee Chair, Committee member, session organizer and moderator, field trip leader, and officer, he participated in no less than 250 such activities. This energy and persistent outreach effort stems from an individual who wants to get things accomplished.

Eugene and Carolyn Shoemaker, for whom this award was established, would be proud to have an individual of Jon's caliber and character to receive this award. And I am proud to call this man my colleague, my friend and my mentor. Winston Churchill once stated that "*We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.*" Jon with his wife Beth have, and continue to live, a public life that is rich and full of giving and mentoring, and we are all enriched by their ceaseless efforts.

2010 GSA Public Service Award — Response by Jonathan G. Price

Thanks to Stephen Testa for his citation, to Jeff Rubin for his nomination, and to Beth Price for her support and talents. The volunteerism of these individuals exemplifies the commitment to public service that GSA recognizes with this award in honor of two remarkable public servants, Eugene and Carolyn Shoemaker. Stephen's volunteer work with the American Institute of Professional Geologists, American Association of Petroleum Geologists, and American Geological Institute has helped the profession immensely. Jeff's volunteering with the Red Cross in part led to a career path that helped bring field safety to the attention of our profession through the Geological Society of America and the Society of Economic Geologists. Beth's volunteer work has introduced great elements of K-12 education from the American Chemical Society to teachers' workshops sponsored by the Nevada Mining Association. A key to motivating volunteers is to make sure that they enjoy what they do. Stephen, Jeff, and Beth have certainly motivated me.

As a general rule in the geological profession, we geos (geoscientists) all serve the public in tangible and noble ways, whether by helping to provide mineral, energy, and water resources used in everyday life; reduce risks from natural and man-made hazards; protect the environment; assure that development is undertaken in ways that achieve goals of economic growth, social stability, and stewardship of the Earth; pursue the frontiers of science; or educate the next generation of scientists, opinion makers, and decision makers.

In other words, in my opinion, there isn't much distinction between geos in industry, government, academia, and non-governmental organizations with special interests. Although at times one group may be at odds with another (government

2010 MEDALS & AWARDS

versus industry; fundamentalist religion versus fundamental science; or NGOs versus developers), an underlying motivation for nearly everyone is public service—helping people and the Earth. I thank you all for your service to the public.

Working with a state geological survey provides great opportunities for those interested in public service. The job includes scientific investigations of the geologic framework and history of a region—fundamental information that underpins nearly all basic research in geology and nearly all applications for society.

As Jim Davis, former New York and California State Geologist, has said, state surveys aren't just producers and wholesalers of scientific information, we are also retailers who translate that information for use by the public. This gives us great opportunities to engage the public through such activities as testifying before city councils, county commissions, state legislatures, and Congress; publishing books and establishing EarthCache

sites for the general public to learn about geology; guiding K-12 teachers on the use of content material in their classes; leading field trips for the public during Earth Science Week; giving talks at local service clubs; and participating in the activities of local, regional, national, and international scientific and professional organizations.

I've had the pleasure of working with experts in hazards and emergency management (through the Western States Seismic Policy Council, the Nevada Earthquake Safety Council, the Nevada Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee, and the advisory committee for the USGS's earthquake program); with economic geologists, mining and chemical engineers, metallurgists, and other professionals dedicated to finding and responsibly developing mineral and energy resources (first in industry then through the Society of Economic Geologists; Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration; Geological Society of Nevada; Nevada Mining

Association; Mining and Metallurgical Society of America; and Nevada Petroleum Society); with professors, fellow survey employees, and others dedicated to high standards and altruistic goals in science (through the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology, Association of American State Geologists, Geological Society of America, National Research Council, and National Science Foundation); and with colleagues who volunteer much of their time to issues of professionalism and the health of geoscience professions (through the American Institute of Professional Geologists, Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists, and American Geological Institute).

I thank all who have made my volunteer work enjoyable, and I am both humbled and honored by GSA to be included among the previous Public Service Award recipients—a group of highly regarded scientists, engaging authors, and friends.