The significant, high-impact scientific work and contributions of Gary Ernst have been widely recognized by the international scientific community through some of the most prestigious awards he has received during his career. These awards include the Geological Society of Japan Medal (1998), the GSA Penrose Medal (2004), the Mineralogical Society of America Roebling Medal (2008), and the Marcus Milling Legendary Geoscientist Award (2008) of the American Geological Institute. These national and international honours attest to Gary’s creative, innovative and frontier work in structural petrology that he always so eloquently documented in the context of regional tectonics and geodynamics of different metamorphic terranes around the world.

Gary Ernst has enriched our science through his own research and leadership, and continues to do so. I do not see any sign of him slowing down in his scientific activities. I am very pleased that the GSA International Section has recognized his fundamental contributions by awarding him the Distinguished Career Award. Congratulations, Gary!

Response by W. Gary Ernst

Yildirim, John, fellow geologists, I am pleased beyond expression, but equally humbled and embarrassed by this recognition—especially when I consider the large number of Earth scientists conducting international geologic research. The ranks of potential award recipients must be enormous. Nevertheless, many thanks! Professional societies celebrate scientific accomplishments with awards, and far more contribute substantially to advancement of the discipline than can ever be properly recognized. Thus, to receive such an honor, one must be industrious, intelligent, and lucky—I’d choose the latter.

Trained as an experimental mineralogist, field geologist, and sometime-geochemist, I have been fortunate to work in contrasting geologic regions in the central and western United States: the early Precambrian of northern Minnesota; the Cretaceous miogeoclinal + Tertiary alkaline volcanics of north-central Montana; and the Coast Ranges, Klamath Mountains, and White-Inyo Range of the California Mesozoic convergent margin. Although these areas are exceedingly diverse and their study most edifying, my interest in Alpine-Circumpacific contractional plate margins has allowed me to investigate subduction complexes and to a lesser extent, coeval landward volcanic-plutonic arcs in Chile, Alaska, SW Japan, east-central China, and the Western Alps, northern Kazakhstan, and the southern Urals. Entry into some of these areas resulted from doctoral and postdoctoral colleagues I was supposedly supervising, but was learning from while we pursued joint research. I have been favored with a remarkably gifted set of UCLA and Stanford graduate students (14 M. Sc., 33 Ph. D.), post-docs + research associates (>45). Equally important for my geologic development, I have had great friends and scientific colleagues at the USGS as well as academic institutions in Japan, Taiwan, Switzerland, Italy, China, Russia, and New Zealand.

Looking back on these international cooperative studies, three were especially formative for my career: The first involved work on the high-pressure/low-temperature metamorphic belts of SW Japan during...
1963-68, where I benefited immensely from associations with Hisashi Kuno, Akiho Miyashiro, Yotaro Seki, and Shohei Banno. The second occurred during 1970-76 when I studied the petrotectonic evolution of the Western Alps in the company of Peter Bearth, Eduard Wenk, Volkmar Trommsdorff, Giorgio Dal Piaz, and Giovanni Piccardo. The third concerned investigations of ultrahigh-pressure continental-collision complexes in central and eastern Asia with Louie Liou, Shige Maruyama, Nick Sobolev, Nick Dobretsov, and Ruth Zhang. Most important of all, my wife, Charlotte, has been unwavering in her love, and in providing active support during mineralogic-geologic-tectonic escapades to various far-off places; she has also persistently tried to educate me regarding the finer things in life.

I heartily thank the GSA International Section for this Distinguished Career Award. I accept it on behalf of the many less-well-recognized Earth scientists far more deserving than I. This sobering knowledge will inspire me to continuing efforts—I’m not done yet!