

## 2014 MEDALS & AWARDS

### 2014 AGI MEDAL IN MEMORY OF IAN CAMPBELL

Presented to **James F. Davis**



James F. Davis  
*Retired California State Geologist*

#### *Citation by John G. Parrish*

Dr. James F. Davis has demonstrated an exemplary career as a professional geologist in public service for 50 years.

Dr. Davis commenced his long service career as an Associate Scientist at the New York State Geological Survey in 1963. Five years later, he was appointed State Geologist of New York, a position he held successfully for the next decade (1968 – 1978). While in this position, Jim demonstrated the importance of geology and seismology as critical fields in the siting of nuclear power plants and associated waste disposal facilities.

In 1978, Jim resigned his position in New York to become the 19th California State Geologist, following a tradition that began in 1850 with the first State Geologist, John Boardman Trask. Jim proved to be the longest serving California State Geologist, with 25 years (1978 – 2003) of creative and honorable service. Under Jim's determined leadership, the then California Division of Mines and Geology greatly expanded its scope of programs from the traditional mining and mineral resources, and regional geologic mapping, into the ever widening and complex fields of geological hazards, earthquake engineering and strong motion seismology, and quantitative seismic hazards assessments. During Jim's tenure he oversaw the passage and implementation of the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (1990), which today has mapped

liquefaction and landslide hazards covering 119 7½ - Minute Quadrangles (7,400 square miles) affecting over 150 communities.

Jim has been a strong advocate for modern seismic monitoring systems as a tool for locating earthquakes and measuring their size, and for acquiring ground motion data for use by structural engineers to make structures more earthquake resilient. In 1971 the California Legislature adopted the Strong Motion Instrumentation Program (SMIP) to monitor the effects of earthquake strong motion on structures. The information gathered by this program directly affects the California Building Code. Under Jim's guidance, the SMIP became the largest strong motion monitoring network in the United States, today with over 1,200 stations and 8,500 instruments in place. In addition, the CGS/SMIP is now an integral part of the California Integrated Seismic Network (CISN), a seismic monitoring network composed of many smaller networks operated by the U. S. Geological Survey, U. C. Berkeley Seismological Lab, Caltech, and others.

Somewhere in Jim's busy schedule, he found time to be the Chair or President of nine geological organizations, including President of the Association of American State Geologists (1985) and President of the American Geosciences Institute (1987). He, also, has been awarded five Lifetime Achievement and Distinguished Service awards.

For 11 years I had the pleasure of working directly with Jim in my capacity as Executive Officer of the California State Mining and Geology Board, which is the policy making body for the California Geological Survey. I developed a deep respect for Jim's scientific acumen, as well as his political awareness and abilities to make things happen.

Today, Jim is anything but retired, continuing to be immersed in geology and its impacts on society – Jim just termed-out as an elected member of GSA's Geology and Public Policy Committee, where typical to his character, he was busily reframing and making more relevant and understandable public policy decisions involving geological matters at local, state and national levels.

As the direct successor to Dr. Davis' survey, I personally can attest to the monuments that he created during his tenure at CGS, both statewide and nationally. It is particularly fitting that Jim Davis, a long-time friend of Ian Campbell whose career also greatly shaped the California Geological Survey, should receive this valued award named after his old friend.

#### *Response by James F. Davis*

As a very young staff member of the New York State Geological Survey I became acquainted with Ian Campbell when the New York Survey hosted the annual meeting of the Association of American State Geologists in 1962, during my second year of employment. In succeeding years, particularly after I became the New York State Geologist, I had opportunities to serve with Ian on many committees and directly witness his wise judgment and capable leadership.

I want to share some of my thoughts about the benefits to society that result when professional earth scientists voluntarily use their time to share geoscience insights with the lay policy makers. When these insights result in the policies achieving their intended outcomes, society in general benefits. During my career I have had the opportunity to see the public policy value of using my time in this pursuit. I encourage all of my colleagues "to be a voice for geosciences in public policy" as stated in the 2013-17 version of Strategic Plan of the Geological Society of America.

During the early and mid 1970s America experienced what I call the "environmental sensitivity awakening" in which the public came to expect that federal, state and local governments would implement policies to reduce environmental abuses. This result was achieved in part by applying geoscience insights in the government environmental management policies in order to create higher quality outcomes. Because of their constitutional role of assuring the health and safety of their citizens, the state governments played a big role this transition. Today, the use of geoscience insights in developing effective ordinances and regulations at all governmental levels to preserve the quality of the environment, is much more extensive than it was before the "awakening". The result has been the transformation from the concept of potentially using geologic insights in environmental management to today's reality. This reality encompasses land-use planning and development, waste disposal of all kinds, preservation of unique geologic areas and a host of other practices.

Yes, a lot remains to be done, but the use of geoscience insights are critical to the environment as we gain additional experience and accomplish further progress in this important area.

I am honored to accept the 2014 Ian Campbell Medal on behalf of myself and the staff geologists who served with me in both New York and California.