

# 2013 MEDALS & AWARDS

## AGI MEDAL IN MEMORY OF IAN CAMPBELL

Presented to  
**Peter A. Scholle**



Peter A. Scholle  
*Scholle Petrographic LLC*

### *Citation by Noel P. James*

Peter Scholle has had an extraordinary career that few of us can match. After graduating with his PhD from Princeton he occupied senior scientific positions within the petroleum industry, was a branch chief with the USGS, a university professor, and state geologist. Peter began his professional career as a petroleum geologist and this aspect has occupied a central part in his life ever since. He then spent almost a decade with the USGS, the latter few years as branch chief the Oil and Gas Division here in Denver. His first foray into the academic sphere was at UT Dallas followed by 14 years as Albritton Professor of Geology at Southern Methodist University. Peter has just retired after being State Geologist and Director of the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Minerals in Socorro for 12 years.

He was extraordinarily successful in all of these endeavors largely because of his engaging personality and his vibrant intellect. Most of us know Peter as an easygoing, charming person with a quick smile and engaging repartee. Beneath this exterior, however, is a razorsharp mind whose extraordinary memory and quick imagination that have made him a world-renown scientist. He was well known to his employees as demanding and yet inspiring because of his unending enthusiasm for earth science.

Likewise all of his students speak of his caring attitude as a mentor. His leadership qualities and especially as the president of SEPM, AGI and the AASG are known to all and each of these societies has benefitted greatly from his days in the chair.

Peter's scientific accomplishments are the envy of many. He is best known for his numerous papers and presentations on the genesis and diagenesis of deep water carbonates and their attributes as hydrocarbon reservoirs. His other fields of research for which he is renown are the diagenesis and porosity development of carbonate reservoirs in general and their burial history. It is, however, the two major books that he as edited and co-written on carbonate rocks and published by AAPG that lie on the desk of just about every carbonate geologist in the world that have made him a household name in sedimentary geology. Recognition of this work and more than 250 scientific contributions has led to 20 prestigious awards.

In addition to all of this all Peter is a teacher who engages his students, undergraduate, graduate, and professional with his casual but focused delivery backed up by personal experience of his working in more than 30 countries over the years. So many of us remember with fondness his field trips to the Caribbean or the Permian Reef Complex because we just learned so much by just being with Peter. As a result it is not surprising that he has garnered so many awards amongst which are the AAPG Distinguished Lecturer, AAPG President's Award (twice), the AAPG Certificate of Merit, the Sproule Memorial Award, and the R. H. Dott Sr. Memorial Award.

Peter shifted focus somewhat in his latter years in government towards more fundamental societal issues. He has been especially active in providing specialist information to legislators and decision makers about the critical importance of geoscience in energy, mineral, and water resource issues. Who of us could have had a better spokesperson?

I cannot think of anyone who is more deserving of this award and a person who exemplifies the very qualities that everyone admired in Ian Campbell.

### *Response by Peter A. Scholle*

I thank Noel James for his kind and generous citation and the AGI, AASG and GSA for this wonderful award. It is humbling to stand here and receive a medal named after a person as distinguished, prolific and

beloved as Ian Campbell and equally difficult to stand here in comparison to the many prior recipients. Nonetheless, I accept the medal gratefully.

There are simply too many people to thank in the time allotted, but I cannot go without thanking my early mentors, John Rodgers and John Sanders at Yale, Robert Folk at UT Austin, Al Fischer and Robin Bathurst at Princeton, my many carbonate collaborators and friends, especially James Lee Wilson and of course Noel James. In addition there were so many wonderful colleagues at the U.S.G.S., the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and the Association of American State Geologists — friends who taught me so much as I journeyed through geology and geopolitics. My career also included contacts with 22 prior Campbell medal recipients but, alas not Ian Campbell himself. Each of the many people I interacted with in my numerous jobs and organizations deflected my career, molded my outlooks on geology and life, and helped guide me through a world of innumerable competing pathways. And more than anyone, I must thank my geologist wife, Dana Ulmer-Scholle, who has been my inseparable companion, my inspiration, and my soul mate over the last 21 years — even more beloved to me than my Labrador retrievers!!!

I would like to say that the “service” for which this medal is largely awarded was never a sacrifice or a burden, but was a chance to give something back to a profession that has given me so much. I think the “service” that I enjoyed the most was working, as a state geologist, to educate both the public and state and federal legislators about current societally important earth science issues. We took participants on field trips and provided them with non-technical explanations about issues as diverse as energy supplies, climate change, water resources limitations, and geologic hazard prediction and mitigation. As a profession, we need to do more such outreach education.

Finally, I am happy to say that I meet the most absolute criterion for receiving this medal — “The recipient must be living at the time of selection”. I am glad to be alive, delighted to be a geologist, and overjoyed and grateful to receive this award.