

IAGC ELECTS FIRST TWO FELLOWS

The International Association of GeoChemistry (IAGC) has established six permanent awards: the Vernadsky Medal, the Ebelman Award, the IAGC Distinguished Service Award, the Hitchon Award, the Faure Award, and the IAGC Certificate of Recognition. In addition, in 2008, the IAGC Council decided to bestow the honor of Fellow on its most deserving members and is pleased to announce the selection of the first two IAGC Fellows: Thure Cerling and Gunter Faure.



THURE CERLING received his BS degree in geology and chemistry from Iowa State University, followed by an MS in geology from Iowa State University, and a PhD in geology from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1977. Over the course of his career, Thure has applied the tools of geochemistry, stable isotopes, and cosmogenic nuclides to study processes occurring near the Earth's surface and the geological record of ecological change. His research includes the isotope physiology and diets of modern mammals, as well as the history of diets of various mammalian lineages extending over millions of years. He is also interested in the geology of Old World paleoanthropologic sites. He applies isotope systematics to the study of modern soils, lakes, and ecosystems to understand the evolution of ecosystems, monsoons, and the atmosphere over geological time scales.

Using cosmogenic nuclides, his research group studies the evolution of landscapes over the last 1 million years. He is also involved in environmental studies, including the use of tritium and helium as hydrological tracers, and investigations of contaminant migration in surface waters or groundwaters.



GUNTER FAURE received his BS degree from the University of Western Ontario (Canada) and then a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA). Following postdoctoral work at MIT, Gunter accepted a position on the faculty of the Department of Geology and Mineralogy of the Ohio State University in Columbus and taught there until his retirement in 2002. Throughout his academic career, Gunter distilled the content of his courses into textbooks on the isotope geology of strontium, low-temperature aqueous geochemistry, the petrogenesis of igneous rocks, isotopes and their applications in the Earth sciences, and planetary science. He became a member of the Board of Directors of the Geochemical Society and served from 1989 to 1997 as the executive editor of *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta*. He joined the IAGC in 1968 and was elected as its vice-president in 1992 and, four years later, he assumed the presidency. At the end of his term in 2000, Gunter became the past president and newsletter editor until 2004, when he took over from David Long as treasurer. Above all, Gunter is at heart an Antarctic field geologist

who believes that geochemists have an obligation to sound the alarm when human activities begin to threaten our well-being on the Earth.

HOWIE RECEIVES HONORARY DOCTORATE



Prof. R. A. Howie, of the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain & Ireland, recently received an honorary doctorate from Derby University, UK.

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not come about because a group of politicians set aside a pot of research money to encourage a new method of communication. It came from a good idea of Tim Berners-Lee to facilitate information management and from a pot of money for free research within CERN, the European Center for Nuclear Research. That funding has paid a big dividend to society worldwide. There are many such examples.

Support for fundamental research has been grim in the European Union and in many other countries during the past years. Aging university infrastructure and dwindling research funding have driven many academics to industry jobs – which is good for industry but not good for producing the next generation of employees. In fact, many companies are deeply concerned about the lacking pool of qualified graduates. But there is hope. In Europe, the 2002 Barcelona agreement deadline looms. By 2010, 3% of the GNP (gross national product) should be spent on R & D (research and development). And in the United States, the winds of change have refreshed political views on the value of research funding and the important contribution that scientific experts can make in advisory roles. Internationally, we look forward to renewed vigour in American research activity.

The Rector of the University of Copenhagen, Ralf Hemmingsen, recently said that leading-edge research cannot be made in dilapidated buildings with old equipment. "One cannot win this year's Grand Prix with a Model T Ford." If society is going to solve some of the major problems in environment, health and sustainability, and add to the banks of understanding, governments will need to take some bold steps:

(1) to provide stable funding for buildings, infrastructure, and technical and academic staff, so teaching and research programs are not at the mercy of yearly fluctuations in student numbers and grant success rates, and (2) to establish a balanced program of research funding that allows a good proportion of free research to balance strategic or topic-focussed programs.

Development and research are fundamentally different. Development has a clear and describable goal. It is driven by the need for profit. Success is predictable. One expects an outcome before one starts, and the only unknowns are how long it will take and how much it will cost. Industry is very good at development, and that is where it belongs. Research is unpredictable. It is curiosity driven. One has a specific research question at the outset, but the results one gets are often unexpected, and it is the interpretation of unexpected results that leads to quantum breakthroughs in thought and understanding. Without a solid base of fundamental understanding, interpretation of unexpected results is hindered or prevented. Not all research projects result in quantum breakthroughs, but the more free research funding is available, the more chance there is. Research is the domain of universities. Ben R. Mottelson, who shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1975, concisely expressed this concept in a recent interview: "If H. C. Ørsted [a famous Danish scientist], who discovered electromagnetism in 1820, had lived under the Strategic Research Council, he would have instead developed an improvement of the candle."

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