

CSPG AWARD

President's Special Recognition Award

The CSPG President's Special Recognition Award has been presented only a few times in the history of the Society. The award is given to those individuals or organizations who are not members of our profession and yet, through their sustained effort, have brought great honour and distinction to the geoscience community. On Thursday, June 5th, at the CSPG Technical Luncheon at the Telus Convention Centre, the award was presented to Randle Robertson by Colin Yeo, the CSPG President, and Ian McIlreath, Randle's nominator.

The citation for Randle Robertson's award reads as follows:

"For outstanding achievement in the promotion and appreciation of Earth and Life Sciences. As Executive Director of the Burgess Shale Geoscience Foundation, he has helped give the Earth a voice through guided hikes, interpretive seminars, teacher workshops, and student research and science programs. The result has been a much greater appreciation by the public of Earth processes and the significance of the evolution of life through mainly the interpretation of the world-renowned fossils preserved in the Burgess Shale."

Although not a geologist by training, Mr. Robertson has developed a true love of the wonders of earth history, and the processes that have shaped the earth, especially those resulting in the mountains to the west of Calgary. This passion was kindled over 25 years as a Park Warden in Yoho National Park and his many trips out into the back-country. It was during this time he was introduced to the world famous Burgess Shale and to the army of more recent researchers on what has become a World Heritage site. His enthusiasm led in 1989 to founding the Burgess Shale Foundation, which he is still intimately involved with today as its Executive Director. Along the way, there have been many successes and many setbacks but Mr. Robertson displayed two attributes common to all great leaders, vision and perseverance.

Since 1995 over 20,000 people of all ages and from around the world have participated on the Burgess Shale and two other principle hikes. It should be noted that these are the only science-



Colin Yeo presenting Randle Robertson with the CSPG President's Special Recognition Award.

based hikes in the four western national parks. In addition, public presentations on earth science topics have been made to at least 22,500 people in venues from around campfires to the Jubilee Auditorium and to over 3,000 students from a number of US and Canadian colleges and universities.

Randle Robertson has consistently looked to find new ways to promote earth science education amongst young students and to get earth science taught in our high schools. The Science Education programs organized and run by the Foundation include:

The Burgess Shale High School Research Project – where original student research has been presented at poster sessions at our conventions:

- The High School Earth Science Internship Program;
- Earth Science Professional Development Workshop for High School Science Teachers in Canada and the US;
- Earth Science Curriculum Enhancement Matrix;
- Community Earth Science Education Network and;
- The Kids in Science Program where high school students in Calgary attend our

joint convention to see a day of science and its application, first-hand.

To accomplish all of this, he has convinced a legion of volunteers who share his vision to help. People like Jon Dudley, Clint Tippett, Murray Coppold, Charles Henderson, Paul Johnston, Nat Rutter, Al Fischer, and Jim Murray, to name but a few of the so many geologists who have helped and have become friends along the way.

In summary, Randle Robertson clearly grasps the significance of geology and firmly believes the public should hear the amazing stories that rocks can tell. What started as an interest became a passion that has led to a vision of building a new interpretive center and a related learning/research facility focused on earth science at Field in Yoho National Park.

Randle thanked the Society for recognizing not only his efforts but those of the many volunteers and staff who have assisted him over the years. He spoke of the role of geoscience education in opening the eyes of our younger generation to the source of all of the resources we so often take for granted. He went on to single out the CSPG as a significant facilitator in that educational process.