LIFETIME MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

BOB HEATH

Chair, Program Committee, Cleveland Water Alliance



Bob Heath joined IAGLR in 1985 and has been actively involved in the association over the years. In fact, he is the only person to have twice received the Anderson Everett Award for service to IAGLR. He was president of the association in 2010, program chair for the 2007 Conference on Great Lakes Research, and also served as chair of both the Conference and Endowment committees. We asked Bob about his background and his involvement with IAGLR.

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

My training was not in any of the traditional ecological fields. I earned a Ph.D. in biophysics from the University of Southern California, with a dissertation on the etiology of cystic fibrosis. During my postdoc in molecular biology at Caltech, I was influenced by Professor Max Delbrück, the "founding father" of modern biophysics. He encouraged me to look for new areas not yet influenced by molecular biology, as I accepted a faculty position at Kent State University.

At Kent State, I began biochemical research in aquatic ecology, specifically the role of alkaline phosphatase in P-limited plankton communities. Later my research broadened to the general role of dissolved organic matter in aquatic ecosystems. One problem—I had no background in ecology. So, my first sabbatical was with Professor Eugene P. Odum (University of Georgia), who encouraged me to explore ecosystem ecology. He told me, "you'll never be known for the work you do, you'll be known only for the ideas you generate."

WHAT ROLE HAS IAGLR PLAYED IN YOUR LIFE?

As a sailor, I greatly enjoyed conducting research from the pitch and roll of the *Lake Guardian* or the *Limnos* and introducing my students to the joy of research on these inland seas. I joined IAGLR realizing I had much to learn from colleagues familiar with these wonderful large lakes. From the first annual research conference I attended, I felt this was my home base. It was a place where new ideas were generated, and research teams could be constructed. Most importantly, it was a venue for my graduate students to present their research in a welcoming atmosphere. Among the highlights of my career are serving as president of IAGLR and aiding in establishing a solid endowment in support of student awards. Now I work with the Cleveland Water Alliance, seeking ways to establish a "water cluster" in the Great Lakes region.

IAGLR Lifetime Membership

Bob Heath is our most recent lifetime member, an option that allows someone to pay a one-time fee and become an IAGLR member for life. He joins 21 current members who have chosen this option not only to stay engaged with IAGLR on a long-term basis, but also to support the association while doing so.

Please consider doing the same when you renew your '22 membership. To learn more, visit our Membership page.