

Canadian Federation  
of Earth Sciences

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## **Mentorship Medal**

### **2010 Recipient: Professor Robert W. Hodder**

**Presented at the Reception for Alumni and Friends Hosted by the Department of Earth Sciences,  
The University of Western Ontario, PDAC Convention, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

**Citation written by Jon North, presented by Bill Mercer**

First of all I would like to thank Jon North for his work towards the nomination of Professor Robert Hodder for the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences Mentorship Award and his work on this citation. The Mentorship Medal was created in 2008 to recognize the sustained and inspirational mentorship of a Canadian Earth Scientist from academia, government, or Industry. Mentorship is the unselfish gift of transferring and imprinting your knowledge and experience on the next generation.

As Jon North has put it, this citation is on behalf of the countless students, friends and colleagues of Robert "Bob" Hodder who were, and continue to be, the grateful recipients of his mentorship.

Bob's mentees are familiar with a "Hodderism" with regards to announcements (including medal citations) that says that: "if it can't fit on one page, it's probably not that important". Bob's mentees know that this means in order to create BS (bullshit) one needs several pages.

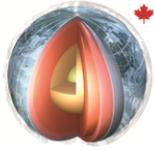
Robert W. Hodder was born in 1932 at Ottawa, Ontario. History suggests that in his youth he engaged in all of the usual activities of a young Hoser, such as delivering newspapers at minus 30 degrees, reluctantly polishing the brass buttons on his cadet uniform and using frozen horse pucks for road hockey.

While graduating with a geology BA honours from Queen's in 1955 and PhD from the University of California, he completed summer regional mapping programs with the GSC.

Bob has completed three careers since the 1950's which are described below.

His first career was in industry. From 1958 to 1970, Bob worked in North America, North Africa, and Latin America at American Metal and Callahan Mining, finally being VP-Exploration. During that time, he also made his first trip to Paris and subsequently he became a travel expert on Parisian life. He was mentored by Dick Hutchinson and Joe Hirschorn, contributing to his unique gift as a geologist, his great sense of humour, and his love of art and culture.

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Bob's second career was in Academia. In 1970, he was hired as an Assistant Professor at the University of Western Ontario becoming full professor five years later and then chairman of the department from 1982 to 1990. He kept his strong connection to industry. Bob taught geology courses to an entire generation of undergraduate students and supervised many Ph.D. and Masters students. This is, no doubt, where the "one page rule" for valuable things and the "multi page rule" for BS (bullshit) was conceived and perfected. He also mentored many of his colleagues in academia in the ways of properly managing a university department.

During Bob's second career, he contributed articles in refereed journals and conference proceedings, edited special papers, and wrote several guidebooks for field trips and workshops. He was also awarded the Duncan Derry Medal by the Geological Association of Canada in 1986.

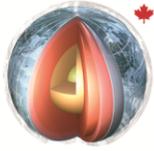
We all know the importance of field trips for the interaction with our professors when at university. Field trips are the ultimate venue for knowledge transfer, experience, and learning. Compiling maps and memoirs, writing field trip guidebooks, setting itineraries and trip budgets, collecting financial and logistical support from mining companies that were operating in the field trip area, and then leading people on those field trips, is Bob's unique brand as an educator and mentor. Bob's approach to field trips is that field trips are to geologists what concerts are to musicians.

Bob is an extraordinarily gifted geologist with a photographic memory for outcrop locations, geological descriptions, place names, and how to get there. When he leads field trips in foreign countries, he amazes the local people with his encyclopaedic knowledge of their countries and the geology of their country.

Field trips are where Bob turned on the lights. Nobody went home from one of his field trips without learning something because on field trips Bob mentored to everybody, at all levels, regardless of age, status, nationality, or field of specialty. He is patient, dedicated, and engaging. He is inimitable. To this day, his students and colleagues ask him to lead field trips so that their colleagues can learn about rocks.

Bob's Third Career is working with his Mentees. Since 1993, Bob has kept in touch with many of his students and colleagues and is still an instructor, mentor, and sounding board for countless students and colleagues, at various stages of their careers. He listens carefully, gives advice freely on any subject (e.g. Paris), and has a genuine interest in the education and welfare of others. Bob's students and colleagues come from all over the world. It would be difficult to find a mining, oil and gas, or consulting

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company, and indeed, a university geology department or a government survey, that does not have at least one senior executive or faculty member that was mentored by Bob.

Many of Bob's students and colleagues not only have ongoing relationships with him, but with each other and they contact him regularly for advice.

We don't really know what Bob's fourth career will be. What we know is that we are dealing with a person who is post glacial, post renaissance, and post modern, someone who has educated and mentored people for 40 years and is now not only the product of his own mentors but also of his mentees. Please join me in congratulating Bob in his wonderful contribution to the lives and careers of so many geologists.

### **Acceptance of the 2010 Mentorship Medal from the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences**

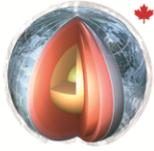
**Robert W. Hodder**

Thank you Bill (Mercer) and Jon (North). It is traditional that award recipients acknowledge and thank everyone who has made the award possible and, upon whose shoulders they stand. I shall express my thanks to one and all personally and as soon as possible. At this moment however, I wish to look ahead and to challenge the University of Western Ontario, its Department of Earth Sciences, and its alumni and friends, and indeed to challenge everyone in Canadian earth sciences. The arching challenge is to meet Western's mission statement – *"To provide the best student experience among leading Canadian research-intensive universities"*. In my opinion, the "best student experience" is part of a learning culture within which students are recognized as individuals and learning meets their individual needs. How can we achieve the best of learning cultures for individuals?

At the University level I challenge the Board of Governors and executives to negate the collective agreement that exists between faculty and staff and the University as an employer. I find it regiments faculty, discourages staff, and impacts the student experience in a negative manner by introducing a contentiousness that is anti-learning. Revamping the relationship between faculty, staff, and management will take time. At Western that agreement comes up for renewal at the end of June 2010. Hence, the challenge is to begin now and complete renewal of a vision of collegiality, professionalism, and trust by 2020.

At the Department level where learning takes place the challenge is three-fold:

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- First, be forever vigilant in promoting a culture of learning. Be constantly welcoming, supportive, and positive; never negative or punitive. Resist regimentation that distracts from the individual student's learning experience.
- Secondly, and specific to Western, in the next two years press forward with today's plan for the Initiative to Enhance Studies in Resource Geology, without compromise, and in trust with its supporters. This is certainly possible if cooperation amongst all management entities within the University remains focused, with a clear division of labour, and leadership from the bottom up. Interest and effort must not flag.
- Thirdly, I challenge Western's Department to take a leading role right now in the new Canadian Mining Innovation Council Exploration Initiative, to lead in this national program. It can raise the bar for Canadian earth science as did Lithoprobe more than a decade ago. Earth science in Canada needs a national, unifying, project in research and teaching.

For alumni and friends gathered at this reception, I challenge you to be not just social but to be proactive contributors to the culture of learning. Specifically, at Western, third and fourth year student laboratories need to replace their aged microscopes. If we are to have the best students and the best learning experience, we need the best teaching equipment. I pledge to buy the first of the needed new microscopes. I challenge you to join me this evening in providing 15 top notch petrographic microscopes fitted for transmitted and reflected light microscopy.

My thanks to the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences for this medal and, for the opportunity to note that what we do is to set a steep learning curve within a supportive, positive culture. Advancing this culture is a challenge. Because you are the best and you want the best, I know you accept and act on this challenge. For this I thank all of you most sincerely.

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