

Acceptance of the 2015 Mineralogical Society of America Distinguished Public Service Award

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Thank you, Peter, for the kind words. They are much appreciated.

At this point, typical Mineralogical Society of America (MSA) awardees will relate why they think they received their honor. Unlike other MSA awardees, I need not guess. Even before Council saw it, the award committee's report and the nomination package came my way as I collected reports for the Council meeting, along with, at first, a puzzling congratulatory sentence in the cover message from the committee chair.

My award nominator and supporters were mostly past MSA Presidents. (Thank you.) Each recognized dual contributions both in my role as MSA's Executive Director and my acting beyond the requirements of the position. It was noted that just doing a good job extremely well might not constitute the exceptional contributions recognized by the Public Service Award. This was the challenge faced by the award nominator and supporters. Thus the letter writers' task primarily became an exercise to communicate to the award committee the wider public service by MSA to the society and, secondarily, my role. Each had a different take on the public service criteria, which reflected their interests and the issues that arose during their time in office. The criteria they wrote about fell into four areas:

MSA'S OUTREACH PROGRAMS

These were the readily recognized public services such as Mineralogy4Kids, Distinguished Lecturer Program, research grant programs, Collector's Corner, and databases. This would also include MSA-Talk, MSA's presence at the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, and the 15 years writing an MSA column for *Rocks & Minerals*. Several have existed for some time requiring tremendous efforts by others, but all need constant attention by the office to succeed. With the advent of the internet, their impact stepped up a notch or two. The educational outreach efforts to non-professionals were previously too expensive for MSA to do, but became feasible with the internet.

MSA PUBLICATIONS

The society's publications are read and admired worldwide. They are the most significant and longest lasting of MSA's public services. Publications were the reason for MSA's founding and its continued existence, so they have been around for some time. I came lately to most of these, but what is cited in my case was recognizing and adapting to the changing technology of the scientific publishing environment: development of MSA publications in electronic format in addition to print, development of the cooperative *GeoScienceWorld* (GSW, 46 journals from 28 societies) with MSA being a founding society, development of *Elements* with MSA being a founding society (17 societies), assumption of the *Handbook of Mineralogy*, and



Mineralogy and Optical Mineralogy as an electronic as well as print textbook. Perhaps lesser known is the *MinPubs.org* site for individual articles, chapter separates, course packs, and out-of-print MSA publications, the MSA Open Access publication library, and the recently posted *American Mineralogist* archive of deposited documents.

MSA RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Over the years I have been, officially or unofficially, MSA's emissary to at least 32 other organizations with which MSA has varying degrees of involvement. The longest and most significant is with Geological Society of America (GSA). Since 1920 there have been bumps along the way, but now there is a well-organized framework for MSA as a GSA Associated Society. The newest relationships are with GSA's Mineralogy, Geochemistry, Petrology, & Volcanology Division (MGPV), the American Geophysical Union (AGU), and the Geological Society of London (GSL). There are several organizations with which MSA is very "close" organizationally or physically. The Geological Society of Washington (the other GSW) for 30 years this year (and I see a few past GSW Presidents here), as well as The Clay Minerals Society and The Meteoritical Society. All three have a physical and administrative presence in the MSA offices. Since 2000, MSA has co-published the *Reviews in Mineralogy and Geochemistry* with the Geochemical Society.

These relationships allow MSA to be a participant in events, such as meetings, that it does not do on its own, make more people aware of MSA and its programs, learn from the different experiences and perspectives of other groups, and, with its co-residents, the cost-effective sharing of improved resources.

MSA FACILITIES

Lastly, there is acting as office/society manager/facilitator for officers, committees, volunteers, staff, as well as the office, library, and record facilities. This was mentioned in connection with the attempt to accomplish all that MSA does, while remaining within available resources, a significant challenge. This shows up in an interesting way when a member or other individual or organization assumes that MSA has the resources, staff, or organization of a much (much) larger society and have to be told otherwise. It is often remarked that MSA punches above its weight.

My award nominators concluded that MSA evolved from an inwardly focused specialty group devoted largely to careful husbandry of its journal and occupying a three-room office with scattered storage facilities to a vibrant, modern, outward-looking society that is seen as a leader and innovator and now occupying nearly 7000 square feet of an office that includes, most importantly, a warehouse with loading docks. But it was recognized that many others have played a role in this transformation. I am here today only because of the dedication of those many other volunteers and staff who gave of their time, effort, and resources to MSA over the past nine decades.

I often hear the remark that MSA should do this, be considering that, etc. MSA is an electronic pdf file. That is what the Commonwealth of Virginia sent us in 2013 as a result of its domestication to that state from its original 1937 District of Columbia incorporation. I printed it out to make MSA more tangible. The printout sits in a file cabinet across from my desk.

But I, along with that piece of paper sitting in the file cabinet, can accomplish very little. Enlarging the circle of consideration around my office, you first encounter two Business Office staff who keep things moving along. Expanding the circle even more

encompasses the Editorial Office with three staff, that produces the *American Mineralogist* in an enviable timely fashion. But we in the office only shuffle things around. For MSA to accomplish anything, we need to look beyond the office. There we find for 2014:

- 5 officers;
- 6 councilors;
- 159 individuals on 23 committees, 4 appointed posts, and 33 liaisons;
- 2 Special interest Groups;
- 2 *American Mineralogist* Editors;
- 5 *American Mineralogist* Special Editors;
- 1 editor for each of the *Reviews*, *Elements*, and the *Handbook*;
- 102 *American Mineralogist* Associate Editors;
- 598 *American Mineralogist* reviewers;
- 1150 *American Mineralogist* authors;
- 3 lecturers, as well as the Administrator;
- 149 individuals associated with the one short course and two *Review* volumes as organizers, authors, speakers, and attendees [organizers (8), authors (79), speakers (14), as well as attendees (48)].

Some individuals may be included twice in the counts here, and not all are members, but card counters among you may note the 2183 total here is 87% of the current membership number (2497). One letter noted the immense volunteer potential of MSA members, but they may not have appreciated the extensive involvement already of members and others in the Society.

Thank you, Mineralogical Society of America, for this honor. I accept this award on behalf of what MSA is: an extraordinary feat of collaboration among often unrecognized and, in many instances, now forgotten individuals for the past 96 years.