

Presentation of the Distinguished Public Service Medal of the Mineralogical Society of America for 2009

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Madame President, Members of the Society, and honored guests:

It's a great pleasure to introduce Robert M. Hazen, the recipient of the 2009 Distinguished Public Service Medal of the MSA. Trained as a crystallographer/mineralogist and former MSA Award winner, councilor, distinguished lecturer, and President of the Society, Bob has had and continues to have an extraordinary career in the mineral sciences. Here we honor him for his remarkable Public Service as a communicator of science and for advancing public knowledge and appreciation of science.

Along with being a Senior Staff scientist at the Geophysical Laboratory, Bob is a Clarence J. Robinson Professor at George Mason University, where he has designed innovative undergraduate and graduate courses to engage broad audiences in the scientific process. Bob has worked tirelessly to promote scientific literacy in numerous monographs and articles, for example in 1991, in the widely successful *Science Matters: Achieving Scientific Literacy* and *The Sciences: An Integrated Approach*, now entering its sixth edition, both coauthored with James Trefil. He has published three critically acclaimed undergraduate teaching manuals, which have served as a springboard for a 60 lecture video and audio series. His book with Maxine Singer, *Why Black Holes Aren't Black* is a clear exposition of way science works for the general public.

His most recent publication, *Genesis: The Scientific Quest for Life's Origin* is standard reading material on the topic for the general public as well as the classroom. Bob has spearheaded a long-term dialog about national scientific learning and education standards through the major national TV, radio, and print media, and through lectures, seminars and workshops he has organized at over one hundred colleges and universities across the country. Bob has been an articulate spokesperson in the creationism and intelligent design debates. He most recently

helped write *Science, Evolution, and Creationism*, published by the National Academies.

If that were not enough, Bob continues to maintain a vibrant research program as we have seen from this meeting. An outgrowth of his recent research is summarized in his paper "Mineral Evolution," a synthesis for Earth history that also lays out a paradigm for an entirely new way of teaching mineralogy, and which currently is the most downloaded paper in the *American Mineralogist*. Most recently, Bob has embarked on a major 10-year international initiative to understand carbon in the deep earth, a project that is also aimed to enhance public understanding and has the potential for major societal impacts.

For those who know Bob personally, he has multiple careers—in the addition to the above, he is an author of some 16 other books, paleontologist, collector, historian, philanthropist, and professional trumpeter. How he does it all is one of the best-kept secrets of the Carnegie Institution. But in my 25 years at the Lab, I've come to realize that it has something to do with his remarkable wife Margee, who has been a great supporter and collaborator in many of these projects.

I must add that throughout all of this, Bob has been generously supportive of young scientists. I speak from experience. Bob supported me on his NSF grant after my Carnegie Fellowship ended and before Charlie Prewitt was able to give me a real job. But more important, I believe I speak for the entire Society in thanking Bob for his exemplary service as a communicator of not only geosciences but science as a whole and its links to the arts and humanities. We look forward to the next movement—his deep Carbon concerto, hopefully it is not the finale. Following the musical theme, and with apologies to Aaron Copeland, I would like to call this tribute "Fanfare for an Uncommon Man." I present Robert Miller Hazen, the 2009 Distinguished Public Service Medalist.