

2002 William Christian Krumbein Medal

hohn **Michael Ed. Hohn** developed a fascination with geology at an early age. While a ninth grader, he had to take an earth science course. During the first day of class, the teacher asked who had rock collections. Mike was the only student to raise his hand, which made him a favorite pupil.

Unbeknownst to Mike, that Christmas the teacher called his parents to suggest that what Mike needed for the Holidays was a collection of minerals, which Mike received, but with all labels removed. He had to identify them: By that time, he knew he wanted to be a geologist.

Mike is the oldest of four siblings. Both of his parents had some post-high school education and concentrated efforts on teaching their children broad principles, such as the importance of a good education, to have an inquisitive mind, and be conscientious about all pursuits in life. Michael Edward Hohn was born in Chicago in 1950 but moved to his father's home state of New York when he was 4. He remained in New York until he went to Bloomington, Indiana, to pursue graduate studies in geology.

Consistent with his unequivocal interest in geology, his undergraduate degree was also in geology, which he received with honors from the State University of New York at Binghamton. The choice of graduate school came as a combination of a Texaco Fellowship, recommendations from his adviser at Binghamton, and the familiarity that Mike gained of instructors while attending Indiana University field camps in Montana. Mike went to Bloomington with the intention to specialize in paleontology. While trying to excel analyzing paleontologic data, Mike became familiar with mathematical geology, particularly with the techniques of cluster and factor analysis. His first computer program was a cluster analysis program that he coded to study fossil assemblages. His dissertation "Seed of fatty acids: taxonomic and evolutionary significance in recent and fossil seeds" is an interesting application of quantitative method to address paleontological issues.

Mike was not satisfied with the completion of a doctoral degree. He went to the University of Bristol, England, as Leverhulme Visiting Scholar. Curiously, this is the place where the previous medalist-Richard Howarth-earned his undergraduate degree. In his 2 years in Bristol, Mike was active in organic geochemistry doing primarily pattern recognition and classification. 1978 was a big year for Mike. Toward the end of his stay in England, he decided to look for jobs back in the United States and to tie the knot with Kay Christensen, the American fiancée he had left behind. Mike ended accepting a position with the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey (WVGS), his present employer. The first professional assignment was in geostatistics, a relatively new field for almost everybody in the 1970s, including Mike. His strong background in applied statistics proved helpful to allow him to venture in the use of geostatistics in energy-related projects-coal, oil, and gas. In a short period, Mike had reached such a level of proficiency in geostatistics that Mike accepted the challenge to write a book at the request of Dan Merriam, editor of the Series Computer Methods in the Geosciences. At a time when the main references in geostatistics had been written by mining engineers, Mike thought that what would be useful was a geostatistics book written from the perspective of a petroleum geologist. The result was *Geostatistics and Petroleum Geology*, published by Van Nostrand Reinhold in 1988 as the seventh title in the series. The book was such a success that it saw a second edition by Kluwer Academic Publishers in 1998.

In 1989, Mike was promoted to Senior Research Geologist, in which capacity he initiated and completed research projects funded at the state level or from outside sources. Projects included several on the gas resources of Devonian shales in West Virginia: reservoir characterization of oil fields, mapping coal quality in West Virginia, coal availability, a statewide geographic information system for coal, and U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded projects utilizing geostatistics. Current projects include study of an Upper Devonian strand-plain oil field, and analysis of uncertainty in coal bed thicknesses used in property assessment for tax purposes. Mike is the West Virginia Survey's coordinator of the STATEMAP program, funded by the U.S. Geological Survey.

At WVGS, Mike has demonstrated excellent skills in analyzing and building solutions to the agency's

problems. During the Desert Storm military operation in Kuwait, the WVGS Deputy Director was recalled to active duty and Mike was asked to take over the job in the emergency. He performed with such a resolve and insight that he received a Commendation of Thanks from the Military Sealift Command Southwest Asia. More recently the WVGS had a legislative performance audit as part of the sunset legislation process. The auditor found a number of areas of concern. Mike was assigned to coordinate and develop a response and courses of action to deal with the performance audit issues. The final product convinced both the West Virginia House and Senate that the WVGS could make the requisite changes promptly and properly. His mobilization of working team of WVGS senior staff made the agency shine. In 2002, Acting Director Carl J. Smith promoted Mike to Acting Assistant State Geologist in recognition of his quality service to WVGS. In 1983, Mike was invited to teach a course on quantitative methods at the Department of Geology and Geography of the University of West Virginia, where he is an adjunct professor. Such connection has proved to be rewarding for Mike. After teaching the course in 1983, he has been invited to present colloquia, to serve in the doctoral committees of several students, and to take care of the quantitative analysis in papers in which the main author is a professor at the Department. The Department was also instrumental in making him a collaborator of A. M. Sandy Liebhold with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Together they have done extensive research and written several papers on tracking the invasion of the gypsy moth, an insect causing the defoliation of trees in eastern United States. Mike joined International Association for Mathematical Geology (IAMG) immediately after being hired by the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey. He had his first personal acquaintance with IAMG members and other mathematical geologists when he attended the Eighth Geochautauqua of 1979, the last of the Syracuse meetings. He was an immediate fit as he has been in every organization that he has joined. Five years later, he was elected Western Treasurer and was organizing the 13th Geochautauqua in Morgantown, West Virginia, on "Big Programs in Small Machines: Research Methods on Mini and Microcomputers." Mike is the most recent one out of only three members who has been elected to serve as Treasurer, Secretary General, and President. The other two are John C. Davis and Richard McCammon. Mike made his service to IAMG unique by additionally serving as Deputy Editor of Nonrenewable Resources and Editor-in-Chief of our flagship journal Mathematical Geology, let alone serving countless times as reviewer, convener, speaker, chairman, and person in charge of the IAMG booth at numerous congresses. He is currently Chairman of the Publications Committee and Book Review Editor of Natural Resources Research.

During Mike's term as president in 1992-96, the Association celebrated its 25 years with a memorable meeting in Prague. Mike and IAMG Vice President Chan-Jo Chung saw in this meeting the opportunity to upgrade the informal geochautauquas. After securing financial support from both the Geological Survey of Canada and the U.S. Geological Survey, Mike and Chang-Jo decided to go ahead with the first IAMG Conference. The meeting took place in Mont Tremblant, Quebec, in 1994, thus starting the present system of conferences taking place every year that there is not an International Geological Congress. Mike was also instrumental in expanding the system of major awards to include the one in honor of John Griffiths and the prize in honor of Felix Chayes. Upon first IAMG President A. Vistelius's passing away in 1995, the IAMG changed the name of the President's Prize to the Vistelius Award. The same year, Mike used his good contacts at the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) to make IAMG an associated society of AAPG.

In addition of being a distinguished scientist and generously serving the Association, the third condition to receive the Krumbein medal is service to the profession, where Mike has also excelled. Mike has been particularly active with the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG), where he is currently President of the Eastern Section, after serving annual terms as Vice President and Secretary. Mike is also a member of Sigma Xi, for which he was President of the West Virginia University Chapter from 1983 to 1986.

As a bonus, Mike is an exemplary family man who cares dearly for his wife, his two children, and his community. For a while, he was involved in a film club that showed eclectic films once a month at the

hospital auditorium. Many were foreign films that had never been in Morgantown, but were worthy of seeing. Mike was greatly involved in making that club work. Since 1995, he has shared his time and talent with the Shack Neighborhood House, a charity organization serving low-income communities of coal miners and unemployed former coal miners. He served as Vice President and President. He has been highly supportive of the athletic abilities of both son Geoffrey and daughter Abigail by assisting coaches and driving them hither and yon, with a ride to Canada over a weekend holding the record. Mike is a tolerant and understanding father, even allowing his son to dye his hair red and then green. Mike balances his intellect and quick wit with a practical everyday side. He is flexible and surprising, for he may be solving some complex geostatistical problem one moment and the next he is tearing up his kitchen floor putting in a new surface. In fact, Mike and Kay did a lot more than that—they completely renovated the wonderful 1859 house where they live. His stories of contractors, weather delays, and loss of his delightful rose garden, show his resilience and perseverance. The house is now squarely in town but was in a rural setting when built. Mike's current challenge is to build a new garage. The project is nearing completion and has already been the site for his son's garage band practice.

Mike and Kay also share an interest for antiques, which outfit much of their house. As newlyweds they attended an auction in rural West Virginia within a week of their wedding. For a while this passion became a small business as Key bought and sold antiques at local antique markets with the assistance of Mike during his free time. For about 4 years, they bought and sold almost anything largely out of the shop near Pittsburgh, but were particularly interested in furniture and ceramics. Ten years ago, the shop started to interfere with rearing the children, and so they retired from business. Today Mike particularly enjoys learning about the history of New York railroads before 1900 and building models at a scale of 1: 72, also called an HO scale. He is a member of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) as well as President of the MonValley Railroad Club, Morgantown. Mike has worked hard to display the club's rail layouts in the community and has won various awards. His accomplishments as railroad modeler earned him a spot in the January 2000 edition of the NMRA Bulletin. The Internet site <http://home.att.net/~m.e.hohn/mhrr.htm> is another good place to learn about this less known side of Mike.

In recognition of all his exceptional merits, the Awards Committee of the International Association for Mathematical Geology was pleased to select Michael Ed Hohn as the 2002 Krumbein Medalist. R.B. McCammon and C. J. Smith were of great help in preparing this citation.

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