



SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON ANTARCTIC RESEARCH

SCAR MEDAL FOR EXCELLENCE IN ANTARCTIC RESEARCH

Paul Mayewski

Professor Paul Mayewski has had a long and distinguished career conducting climate change research in Antarctica. Paul's primary research interests are climate change and change in the chemistry of the atmosphere. He has pursued these interests by collecting snow samples and ice cores not only from the Antarctica, but also in the Arctic, the Andes, New Zealand and the Himalayas and Tibetan Plateau. He is the founder and Chair of the Executive Committee for the International Trans-Antarctic Scientific Expedition (ITASE), which is reconstructing the Antarctic climate and chemistry of the atmosphere for the last 200 years. From its original formulation in 1990, primarily as a result of Paul's efforts, the aim of ITASE has been the collection and interpretation of a continent-wide array of environmental parameters, assembled through the coordinated efforts of scientists from 15 nations. Because of the remoteness of the continent, Antarctica is an ideal location to monitor biogeochemical cycles and local-to-global scale climate change. This remoteness has prevented the collection of as much instrumental data as in the northern hemisphere, yet these data are required to assess Antarctica's role in and response to environmental and climate change. ITASE has been focused on determining the spatial variability of Antarctic climate parameters, such as accumulation, air temperature and atmospheric circulation over the last 200 years, and, where the data are available, the last 1000 years. ITASE was adopted as a key science initiative by both the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme and SCAR. Paul is the Field Leader of the US ITASE expedition and has led more than 35 scientific expeditions to the Antarctic, where a peak is named for him and where he explored uncharted territories. He has also worked extensively in the Arctic, where he led fellow scientists in the recovery of a 250,000-year long record of climate change from Greenland. In the Himalayas he led the first scientific expedition into the glaciers of interior Ladakh since the early 20th century. He has also worked on the Tibetan Plateau. Along with Frank White, Paul published a book for popular audiences - "The Ice Chronicles" - that captures the adventure of scientific research in remote reaches of the Earth. He has developed strong collaborative activities with numerous international institutions, including those of China, Nepal, Australian and New Zealand. He has also helped to foster public understanding of climate change issues with several museums, including the Museum of Science in Boston and the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

Jörn Thiede
SCAR President

XXIX SCAR
July 2006