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David Karl of the University of Hawaii to receive highest honor from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

A University of Hawai'i marine scientist who studies the humblest organisms in the sea has received the highest honor of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Henry Bryant Bigelow Award in Oceanography.

Microbial biologist and oceanographer David M. Karl of the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology will be presented the award to honor his contributions to the field of microbiology and the ecological role of microorganisms in the sea.

"David Karl's accomplishments have revolutionized our view of microorganisms in the ocean," Bigelow Medal Committee Chair John Hayes of WHOI said. "By developing projects that have attracted numerous co-workers and by sharing all of the observations through freely accessible databases as well as by publishing more than 240 research papers, he has amplified his impact and become one of the leading figures in oceanography."

"Dr. Karl's research at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa has added immeasurably to the world's knowledge of just how critical the seas are to the well-being of our planet," said University of Hawai'i at Manoa Chancellor Peter Englert. "We are pleased to count him among our most distinguished scientists in ocean and environmental studies."

Colleagues praised Karl's "originality, breadth and depth, exceptional creativity, insightfulness, and visionary perspective and leadership." They cited his contributions to the development of new methods for the study of microbial ecology; his leadership in promoting and implementing measurements of microbiological activities; and his biogeochemical modeling of planktonic processes in the ocean.

"Karl's work and vision have influenced the directions and perspectives of several disciplines, and he continues to apply a broad perspective to the studies of climate change, microbial biology, and ocean engineering, and to oceanography in general," said Robert B. Gagosian, Director and President of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

"Despite the importance of microbial activities in sustaining the global environment, methods for their measure and characterization were simple and limited when Karl began his research career three decades ago. His early studies focused on developing methods for estimating microbial activity and biomass in natural habitats and led him from the open ocean to Antarctica, where he helped establish a Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) site near Palmer Station. He also studied hydrothermal vents in the deep



David M. Karl

ocean. For the past 16 years, he has led sustained oceanographic measurements at the Hawaii Ocean Time-Series station, a long-term study of the regulation of the ocean ecosystem at a key location off Hawaii.

Karl received a bachelor's degree in biology from the State University College at Buffalo, New York, in 1971, a master's degree in biological oceanography from Florida State University in 1974, and a Ph.D. degree in oceanography from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego, in 1978. He joined the faculty of the University of Hawaii as an assistant professor of oceanography in 1978 and was promoted to his current position of professor of oceanography in 1987. He has been a member of the affiliate faculty of the Bermuda Biological Station for Research since 1995. In the course of his career, Karl has spent more than three full years at sea, including 23 expeditions to Antarctica.

The Bigelow Award is presented "to those who make significant inquiries into the phenomena of the sea." The award was established in 1960 by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution's Board of Trustees in honor of the Institution's first Director, Harvard biologist Henry Bryant Bigelow, who was also the first recipient. Bigelow served as WHOI Director from 1930 to 1940, as President of the Corporation from 1940 to 1950, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees from 1950 to 1960. The award, a medal and cash prize, is given to individuals in any field of oceanography without limitation as to age or nationality and is presented for an outstanding contribution to oceanography rather than a cumulative record of achievement. Nominations for the award were received from prominent scientists around the world.

Previous recipients of the Bigelow Award include British oceanographer John Swallow (1962), geologist and seafloor cartographer Bruce Heezen (1964), physical oceanographer and former WHOI Director Columbus Iselin (1966), geophysicist Frederick Vine of the University of East Anglia (1970), WHOI physical oceanographer Henry Stommel (1974), paleoceanographer Wolfgang Berger of the University of California at San Diego (1979), WHOI microbiologist Holger Jannasch (1980), physical oceanographer Arnold Gordon of Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University (1984), physical oceanographer Hans Rossby of the University of Rhode Island, and Falmouth businessman and former WHOI engineer Douglas Webb (1988). The award was presented in 1992 to biologists Alice Alldredge of the University of California at Santa Barbara and Mary Wilcox Silver, an adjunct senior scientist at Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute in California, and was last presented in 1997 to WHOI chemist William Jenkins.

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) is a private, independent marine research and engineering and higher education organization located in Falmouth, MA. Its primary mission is to understand the oceans and their interaction with the Earth as a whole, and to communicate a basic understanding of the ocean's role in the changing global environment.

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