



Association of Applied Geochemists

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W.K. FLETCHER – AAG GOLD MEDAL AWARD FOR 2021



The Association of Applied Geochemists is pleased to announce that the 2021 Gold Medal for outstanding contributions to exploration geochemistry is awarded to **Dr. W. K. Fletcher**, Professor of Geological Sciences (retired) at The University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada).

William Kenneth ('K') Fletcher was born in England and received both his BSc in geology and his PhD in applied geochemistry from the Imperial College of Science and Technology, University of London (UK), where he was a student of the pioneering exploration geochemist John Webb. Shortly afterwards, in 1968, he moved to The University of British Columbia (UBC), where he would spend his entire professional career. From 1968 till 1971, he was a postdoctoral fellow with Harry Warren working on the application of geochemistry to agricultural and public health issues as well as to mineral exploration. Upon Warren's retirement, K was appointed assistant professor in the Department of Geology in 1971, and later appointed associate professor in 1979 and professor in 1987. He served as Acting Head of the Department of Geological Sciences in 1992–1993. From 1999 until his retirement in 2003, K occupied the Norman B. Keevil Chair in Mineral Exploration.

In all, K spent 35 productive years at UBC as a researcher and teacher, continuing and expanding on UBC's leadership in exploration geochemistry training and research, which Harry Warren began many years before. During that time, he published over 100 scientific papers on exploration geochemistry and related topics, including 76 in refereed journals. He also authored, co-authored or edited three books, most notably his 1981 textbook *Analytical Methods in Geochemical Prospecting*.

K's most significant research at UBC centred on the fluvial transport of heavy minerals, including gold and cassiterite, in temperate and tropical regions; on the development of effective methods of sampling and analysis of stream sediments for mineral exploration; and on the statistical evaluation of the results of regional geochemical exploration surveys. His work in stream sediment transport in various climatic regions remains a foundation of regional geochemical programs in the mineral exploration industry. He also made important contributions to our understanding of the distribution and behaviour of base and precious metals in soil, till, and organic sediments in glaciated terrain. K conducted field investigations, delivered invited lectures, and gave short courses in many parts of the world, most notably in Canada, US, Brazil, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

K was also fully engaged with the mineral industry outside the university environment and, during leaves of absence from UBC, was the Chief Geochemist to MINDECO in Zambia (1975–1978) and the United Nations Geochemist and Team Leader at the Southeast Asian Tin Research and Development Centre in Malaysia (1982–1984). He was active in the Association of Exploration Geochemists (AEG) throughout his career, serving as president in 1991–1992, and was AEG distinguished lecturer in 1988–1989, with his lecture tour including several cities in Europe, Australia, and Brazil. He was, at various times, an AEG councillor and served as chairman of both the Short Course Committee and the Regional Geochemical Committee. K also served as co-editor of the *Journal of Geochemical Exploration* in 1998–1999, was a member of the Canadian Geoscience Council, and represented the discipline of geochemistry on the Geoscience Committee of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia.

Perhaps K's greatest contribution to the discipline of applied geochemistry, however, has been as a teacher and mentor, in training many young scientists at the MSc and PhD level. He supervised 23 graduate students, many of whom went on to important leadership roles as exploration geochemists in industry, academia, and government. He was very generous with both his time and ideas, and no less than six of his graduate students were awarded the AEG Student Paper Prize for papers co-authored with K. With his energy, enthusiasm, and many years of leadership in geochemical research and in teaching students, he played no small role in helping to make Vancouver the important global centre of exploration geochemistry, which it has become.

K Fletcher retired from UBC in 2003, after which he and his wife Donna were able to devote themselves full-time to their avocation of wildlife photography. His exemplary record as a researcher, teacher, and global ambassador for exploration geochemistry makes him a worthy recipient of the AAG's Gold Medal. The medal presentation will take place in October 2022 at the upcoming 29th International Applied Geochemistry Symposium in Viña del Mar, Chile.

DR. PAUL MORRIS – AAG SILVER MEDAL AWARD FOR 2021



The Association of Applied Geochemists Silver Medal is awarded for dedicated service to the association, to those individuals who voluntarily devote extraordinary time and energy to advancing the affairs of the AAG. For 2021, the AAG is pleased to announce that the Silver Medal is awarded to Dr. Paul Morris, Chief Geochemist (retired) of the Geological Survey of Western Australia.

Paul completed his BSc (Hon) in geology at the University of Otago (New Zealand) in 1976 and his PhD at the Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand) in 1981. He held various teaching positions at the University of Sydney (Australia) and Shimane University (Japan). In 1987, he joined the Geological Survey of Western Australia, becoming the Chief Geochemist in 1997. He retired in 2018 after a 30-year career at the Geological Survey of Western Australia, including 22 years as Chief Geochemist.

The award of the Silver Medal to Paul honours his long-standing and continuing service to the AAG, on the Executive Council, on no less than six AAG committees, and through many other AAG activities over the course of his long and distinguished career. He served as president during 2010–2011, served five terms as an ordinary councillor, and notably was co-chair of the very successful 2005 International Applied Geochemistry Symposium in Perth (Australia). He has been a tireless contributor to the AAG's journals over the years and has reviewed numerous technical articles in the *EXPLORE* newsletter. His committee service has been marked by a record of thoughtful evaluation and improvements. He is a most worthy recipient of the 2021 Silver Medal.

This is the first award of the Silver Medal since 2016. More information on this and other awards of the association is available on the AAG website at <https://www.appliedgeochemists.org/association/awards>.

Formal presentation of the medal to Dr. Paul Morris will take place at the 29th International Applied Geochemistry Symposium in Chile in October 2022.

Stephen Cook
AAG Past President
Chair, Awards & Medals Committee