

CAG Award for Scholarly Distinction in Geography – Dr Robin Davidson-Arnott



In an exemplary academic career of over thirty years, Dr. Robin Davidson-Arnott has been a leader in the field of coastal geomorphology here in Canada and worldwide. Robin received all his academic degrees in Geography from the University of Toronto culminating with a Ph.D. awarded in 1975. After spending one year as an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto, he joined the expanding Department of Geography at the University of Guelph as an Assistant Professor - with subsequent promotions to Associate Professor in 1980 and to Professor in 1988 - and where he would spend the remainder of his academic career until retirement as a Professor Emeritus in 2009.

His work has made significant contributions in the scientific advancement and knowledge regarding coastal sedimentary systems, dune environments, nearshore erosion dynamics, and beach processes based on his field work in the Great Lakes, Atlantic Canada, and Europe. Robin is an active collaborator in a large number of research studies examining aeolian sediment transport on beaches, beach/dune interaction and the evolution of foredunes. The focus of much of this work is on instantaneous sediment transport and the aim to link processes at this scale to evolution of the system on a decadal scale and thus ultimately to develop models that will be useful for addressing management issues such as the impact of climate change and sea level rise. His diverse interests and expertise during his career have also lead to studies of salt marsh dynamics and cohesive coasts. Robin is especially known for his long term research on the beach and dune dynamics of Long Point on the north shore of Lake Erie, and similar studies in New Brunswick, P.E.I., the Bay of Fundy, Denmark and Ireland. This research has been funded by numerous grants and support from many agencies, including NSERC, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the U.S National Science Foundation, Canadian Wildlife Service, and Parks Canada.

His work has resulted in over fifty peer reviewed papers in leading scientific and professional journals, including the *Canadian Geographer*, *Marine Geology*, *Canadian Journal of Earth Science*, *Applied Geography*, *Geomorphology*, and the *Journal of Coastal Research*. In addition, Robin has authored or coauthored 45 book chapters or edited conference proceeding papers. His research has advanced techniques and methods within the field of coastal geomorphology and the resulting outcomes and publications are standard citations. He has authored numerous research reports and project studies and his newest book *An Introduction to Coastal Processes and Geomorphology* (Cambridge University Press, 2009) is already becoming a standard for undergraduate instruction.

His career has also been highlighted by varied consulting roles on numerous coastal projects and planning initiatives, including work associated with the Great Lakes water levels reference study by the International Joint Commission and establishment of the Ontario Great Lakes Shoreline Management program and Great Lakes Natural Hazards Policy. Throughout his career Robin has made significant contributions to federal and provincial policies and programs related to Great Lakes and coastal issues in Canada. His expertise has been called upon in the development of coastal and shoreline management plans, addressing impacts to coastal dune systems from human activities, proposed coastal development and implications to natural systems, and in addressing various aspects of Great Lakes water level regulations.

Robin has been an active graduate student advisor throughout his career and to date has supervised the completion of 39 theses (33 Masters, 6 Ph.D.) with his graduate students having gone on to successful careers in the private and public sectors, with several achieving academic appointments. Robin is well known and respected for his encouragement and support for the education and careers of his graduate students, often facilitating publication of their research, conference presentations, securing funding support,

and mentoring early career academics. At the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, his career was the focus of a special session organized by the AAG Coastal and Marine Specialty Group with presentations by many of his professional collaborators and former graduate students. In summary, his scholarly achievements have made important contributions to the field of coastal geomorphology, played a major role in policy and decision-making, and enhanced his profession and the scholarly and academic careers of his many graduate students. Dr. Robin Davidson-Arnott is a deserving recipient of the 2012 CAG Award for Scholarly Distinction in Geography, an honor his colleagues and students applaud and celebrate.