

Guidelines for the Preparation of ROCK STAR Profiles

7 June 2021

Rock Star articles are published by the Geological Society of America in *GSA Today*. A complete set is maintained on the GSA website. The articles' purpose is to provide a two-page profile of a notable geoscientist whose contributions have influenced the development of the discipline. The emphasis is on the featured Rock Star's early life, the circumstances of choosing geoscience, and early career history. The Series is under the supervision of an editorial committee, whose membership is approved by the GSA History and Philosophy of Geology Division. Final copy editing is carried out by *GSA Today* editors.

Prospectus:

Authors wishing to prepare profiles should express their interest by filling out the GSA Today Rock Stars Interest Form (<https://forms.gle/nbi2WHdLADuuD28C7>). You should plan to submit a *one-page* Prospectus of the proposed Rock Star. (Optional instructions for emailing the Prospectus are provided on the form.) The Prospectus will then be circulated to members of the Committee for review and approval. The proposal should state why the subject is a suitable Rock Star, and what sources are available for the profile (e.g., obituaries, biographies, archive information). Potential Rock Stars should have been **deceased for at least ten years**. While the emphasis in the series has been on North American geologists, Rock Stars now may be extended to other countries. Authors who would like further advice can contact one of the Committee members.

The Mechanics:

These profiles are required to fit into a two-page spread in *GSA Today*. To keep within these two pages, the character count (available in all word-processing programs) for the text should be approximately 10,000, including spaces between words, and blank space after headers. A profile with two column-width images should be no more than 1700–1800 words, including the title, author's name and address, acknowledgments, figure captions and references. Please include headings in the text because they make articles more readable. With the first draft, three or four photographs should be submitted, from which the Committee can choose two. A short (25-word maximum) caption should be included for each illustration. The series is aimed at younger geologists and students in the hope of providing inspiration and role models. Accordingly, preferred photographs are from the early careers of our subjects, and especially ones showing the subject doing something geologic in the field or laboratory.

The First Draft:

When a Prospectus has been approved, the author will be instructed to prepare the first draft. At least two Rock Stars Committee Members will provide feedback on the draft. Based upon the reviews, the manuscript will be recommended for acceptance, modification, or rejection.

The profile should be written in a simple narrative style, and NOT in the style either of a laudatory obituary, or of a scholarly article. In most cases, only one or two references should be listed. Original archival research is not required but it is certainly welcome. Where a publication or experience was critical in career development and deserves special explanation, help from colleagues may be needed. Authors should give only minimal information about the Star's administrative positions and awards.

Insofar as possible, authors should try to address some the following questions: What influences in the subject's family and early life led them to science and geology? What were the turning points in their development as a geologist? Who influenced them? Certainly, the profiles should include the signal accomplishments and influences upon colleagues, students, and our science, but these should not be the main focus of the profiles. Some authors have been lucky enough to have found or discovered a 'red thread,' or seminal experience, which connects the Star's life and accomplishments with his or her early life (e.g., Darwin's cruise on the *Beagle* or Walcott's fossil collecting). Many of our older Stars lived when geoscience and life were quite different than they are today, and these differences should be explained in terms that younger readers can understand.

The author should obtain copyright releases of illustrations, if required, and include these with the revised manuscript. Photocopies of photographs are acceptable in the review stage of the manuscript but for publication higher resolution images are required.

Final Draft

Most profiles go through more than one draft (three is normal). After the final draft is accepted, it is forwarded to the *GSA Today* editor for copy editing.

Submit Now:
GSA Today Rock
Stars Interest Form

Appendix

GSA Today Manuscript Sizing

GSA Today page width is 43 pi; for two columns, each column is 21.5 pi; for three columns, each column is 14 pi. The total height (depth) for two columns is 113 pi; for three columns, 169.5 pi. In the example below, a column width figure with a height of 28 pi will occupy $28/113 = 0.25$ page. The total number of characters (including blank space) per page is 6500. In the example below, the character count was 9600, but 200 more must be added for blank spaces not counted by the word processing software. Below is an estimated sizing for a typical two-column Rock Stars profile.

Figures:

- (1) 21.5 pi wide \times 28 pi high @ 100% = .25 page
- (2) Total pages for figures = .5

Character count:

Text: $9,600 + 200$ for extra space around headers, author credits
 $\div 6,500 = 1.5$ pages

Total pages: 2.0