CAROL M. WICKS

Carol Wicks started her academic life as an engineer, discovered caving in graduate school, and turned to the discipline of environmental sciences as a way to apply the mathematical physical sciences to the study of karst. Carol is widely recognized by her scientific peers for her elucidation of the hydrogeology of karst basins. She is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Geological Society of America, and the National Speleological Society. Earlier this year, she was awarded the 2017 Science Award of the National Speleological Society for her sustained dedication to the scientific study of caves.

Carol is Chair of the Department of Geology & Geophysics at Louisiana State University, a position she has held since being appointed the Frank W. and Patricia Harrison Professorship in 2009. Carol began her professorial career at University of Missouri in the Department of Geological Sciences (1993–2008) following a National Research Council postdoctoral appointment at the U.S. Geological Survey. She completed her Ph.D. (1992) and M.S. (1989) in environmental sciences at the University of Virginia. Carol also holds degrees in chemical engineering: M.S. from University of Virginia (1984) and B.S. from Clarkson College of Technology (1980).

While still a student, Carol made her first research presentation at the 1990 GSA Annual Meeting, and her diverse and meaningful contributions to GSA have grown steadily since. Initially attending the Hydrogeology Division’s awards luncheon and the student reception, and then coming to the post-luncheon business meetings and the early-morning Management Board meetings, she rose to leadership of the Division: technical program chair (2000–2001), 2nd vice chair (2007), vice chair (2008), chair (2009), and past chair (2010). Further serving the Society and the discipline of hydrogeology, Carol edited two GSA Special Papers. And, Carol brought her students to participate and serve in GSA Hydro Division, too.

Carol served for years as president and later as vice-president for research of the Karst Waters Institute (KWI), a GSA-affiliated society. She used her leadership position in both societies to help bring karst hydrogeology to the high level of recognition that it now enjoys at the GSA annual meetings.
GEORGE BURKE MAXEY
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The award for 2017 is presented to Dr. Carol M. Wicks for her service to the hydrogeology profession, to the Hydrogeology Division, and to GSA.

Carol’s sustained contribution to the scientific study of karst hydrogeology has taken numerous productive forms. She advanced our understanding of karst systems through her publications and presentations. She organized other researchers into publication of collected works in edited volumes. She convened technical sessions at professional meetings, notably bringing excellent karst science to new visibility at GSA. She also trained students, brought them to GSA meetings, involved them in the Hydro Division, and, thereby, enriched our community. As president of the Karst Waters Institute, she promoted collaborative, multidisciplinary research and convened specialty conferences focused on karst.

Carol has done the hard organizational work that makes our Division successful. Serving as technical program chair and all the various steps of the Management Board in the Division, Carol kept us moving forward. During her term as Division chair, she became department chair at her new institution, immediately immersing herself in mentoring junior faculty and forging relationships with alumni and donors. Carol has been doing the thankless work of department chair for most of a decade. All the while, she has been publishing, producing graduate students, reviewing manuscripts and proposals, serving on awards committees, and attending professional meetings.

Carol nearly embodies the word service. She works hard, staying behind the scenes, creating opportunities for others. She began her academic research career as a volunteer caver assisting on someone else’s thesis project. That willingness to help, even if getting wet and dirty, has been evident in her entire career. Luckily for hydrogeology, Carol is exceedingly capable of helping in a large variety of ways. And, apparently, she never says, “No.” Her many contributions make it particularly difficult to identify a singular reason to recognize Carol with this award. Maybe she deserves the award most especially because she is so self-effacing about the service she has contributed.

—Janet S. Herman, Citationist