



AGS DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIST AWARD. GESNER MEDAL - 1997
John Malpas

Dr. John Malpas is one of the foremost earth scientists in Canada today and is a recognized world leader in igneous petrology, particularly that of ancient and modern ocean crust. He is an internationally recognized scientist who has made many contributions to geoscience in the Atlantic region. John has devoted more than 20 years to the study of ophiolites in Atlantic Canada and elsewhere and has completely changed our views on these important features. His early work on the Bay of Islands ophiolite stands as a classic in its field. He demonstrated that this body is clearly an uplifted piece of oceanic lithosphere, not an ultramafic intrusion as earlier thought. As a result of this work, ophiolites were seen to be produced by plate tectonic processes and to mark ancient sutures in the earth's crust.

John has applied his experience from Newfoundland to ophiolite occurrences around the world. His expertise allowed him to be among the first to participate in marine studies and to make comparisons between ophiolites and in situ ocean crust. His models for oceanic crustal construction, including coeval magmatism and crustal deformation, are now accepted by the marine geoscience community worldwide. However, John's interest in Atlantic geology is not confined to ophiolites. He has also published extensively on volcanic rocks of the Avalon Zone, on acid/basic plutonism in northeastern Newfoundland, particularly Fogo Island, and on alkaline intrusions with kimberlite affinities in Labrador. His publication list contains more than 50 papers and abstracts related to the regional geology of Atlantic Canada.

John is a former President of GAC and in 1992, he was elected a member of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. He has held many important committee positions in the scientific community and has supervised Canadian participation in the International Ocean Drilling Program for the last 6 years. John has also been instrumental in training many Atlantic geoscientists, having supervised more than 30 graduate students at Memorial University. In recent years, he has also served as the Dean of Graduate Studies at Memorial and has tirelessly promoted the Atlantic region in Canada and abroad. He is an enthusiastic and dedicated teacher and a leader in the national and international scientific community.