



**AGS DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIST AWARD. GESNER MEDAL - 1998**  
**Paul Schenk**

Paul Schenk is the highly respected, and recently retired, Carnegie Professor in the Department of Earth Sciences at Dalhousie University. His long and distinguished research career has followed two distinctly different paths.

First, his painstaking stratigraphic unraveling of the enigmatic turbidite deposits of the Cambro-Ordovician Meguma Group of southern Nova Scotia, and his insightful interpretation of their dispersal patterns turning him toward Morocco as a source region, have legitimately earned him a world-wide reputation, and the affectionate nickname of "Mr. Megu". Last year marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his provocative benchmark publication entitled "Southeastern Atlantic Canada, Northwestern Africa, and continental Drift" (CJES 8, 1218, 1971) which, significantly, received its first incarnation in Maritime Sediments a year earlier. With those contributions, and the many subsequent papers which strengthen the case, Paul has single-handedly achieved acceptance of southern Nova Scotia as a "chip of Africa". Awe-struck trans-Atlantic visitors still make pilgrimages to his office.

Second, he has challenged existing ideas and applied new models to the Lower Carboniferous carbonate rocks of Atlantic Canada. In the 1960s he reinterpreted the Macumber Limestone of the basal Windsor Group as strand-line carbonates deposited under low subtidal to high intertidal conditions, concluding somewhat heretically that the Macumber laminites had mound carbonates as lateral facies equivalents. Paul and his students went on to study these economically important mounds (the Gays River Formation) in great detail but were partially thwarted by heavy dolomitization of the rocks. Paul solved this dilemma in the late 1980s by collaborative research on the undolomitized equivalent Lower Codroy Group carbonates of western Newfoundland. With characteristic courage he challenged his own hard-won, earlier conclusions. That the basal laminites of Atlantic Canada were the result of deeper water, bacterial precipitation and that their mound equivalents grew at deeper-water hydrothermal vents and/or seeps by bacterial chemosynthesis, was both shocking and revolutionary and has resulted in numerous papers, including two broad syntheses spearheaded by Paul of the regional deposition during this part of the Early Carboniferous.

Anyone who has been in the field with Paul Schenk, has been taught by him, or has had him as a colleague or friend, knows of his perennially youthful enthusiasm, of his constant self-examination of the validity of an idea, and of his relentless search for new models to explain his observations. For more than thirty years, Paul has brilliantly investigated the rocks of Atlantic Canada, has inspired and challenged generations of students, has done fundamental and outstanding research on the clastic stratigraphy and carbonate sedimentology of Atlantic Canada, and has formulated depositional and tectonic models whose application and interest reach far beyond this region.