



**AGS DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIST AWARD. GESNER MEDAL - 2001**  
**Brendan Murphy**

Dr. Brendan Murphy's contributions to the Avalonian geology of the Atlantic region started with an M.Sc thesis project at Acadia University on Late Precambrian volcanic rocks of the Fourchu Group in southern Cape Breton Island, and continued with his doctoral studies at McGill University on the Late Precambrian geology of the Antigonish Highlands. The latter study is particularly significant because it resulted in a dramatic re-evaluation of the geology of the region, and paved the way for more recent investigations which have profoundly changed our understanding of the Precambrian evolution of the Atlantic Region.

Dr. Murphy continued and expanded his studies of the Avalon terrane by assuming his present faculty position at Saint Francis Xavier University, where he is now Chair of the Department. The Antigonish Highlands project was followed by a similar study of the eastern Cobequid Highlands that has produced at least a dozen refereed publications. This, in turn, was followed his research on the St. Marys Graben. During the same period, Dr. Murphy broadened the scope of his research to include regional correlative studies within the Avalonian-Cadomian belt of the northern Appalachians and western Europe, and global paleogeographic reconstructions based on his interpretations of Late Proterozoic tectonics.

Dr. Murphy's contribution to the advancement of geoscience in the Atlantic Region extends well beyond that of his own research: He has served as chairman of the Atlantic Provinces Council on the Sciences; he is past president of the Atlantic Geoscience Society and convened their Annual Colloquium in 1988; he is the Canadian leader for IGCP Project 319; he is Earth Scientist columnist for the Cape Breton Post; and he has provided innovative leadership as chairman of his department at a time when the very existence of geology departments in Nova Scotia has been threatened by provincial rationalization.

Dr. Murphy's contribution to the geoscience of the Atlantic region has therefore been profound, and spans research, education and the facilitation of both through service.