

The Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal 2015

Author: Messerli, Bruno

Source: Mountain Research and Development, 35(4) : 416-418

Published By: International Mountain Society

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-15-00104>

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

The Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal 2015

Jack D. Ives Is the First Lifetime Achievement Award Winner.

Mountain Research and Development (MRD) can be extremely proud to announce that Jack D. Ives is the winner of the lifetime achievement edition of the Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal for 2015. Jack Ives was the founding editor of the journal, which started publishing worldwide on mountain systems and mountain development—with a vision of transboundary cooperation and science–policy dialogue—in May 1981. Jack’s wife, Pauline Ives, worked as assistant editor from 1980 to 1997, when the family left the United States and returned to Ottawa, Canada. Our great thanks and compliments go to Jack and Pauline Ives. In 2000, MRD’s editorial office moved from the Department of Geography at Carleton University, Ottawa, to the Centre for Development and Environment at the University of Bern, Switzerland, and Jack and Pauline Ives handed over editorial duties to Hans Hurni, Ted Wachs, Susanne Wymann von Dach, and Anne Zimmermann.

This is the first time that the Hillary medal has been given to recognize lifetime achievement in *mountain research and development*, and it is fitting that Jack Ives, MRD’s founding editor, should be the recipient: He devoted his life not only to mountain research, but also to mountain development, on behalf of the people and communities living in mountain areas.

Jack Ives and I were both fascinated when a new appeal by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for better cooperation between the natural and human

sciences was launched in 1971, the Man and Biosphere (MAB) program. MAB at that time consisted of 14 thematic programs, covering the main ecosystems of the world. Program number 6, with the title “Impact of Human Activities on Mountain Ecosystems,” came just at the right moment for us to put even more emphasis on mountains in our research. Forty years later, in May 2011, in the executive summary of the Third Nobel Laureate Symposium on Global Sustainability in Stockholm, Sweden, we read: “Ecosystems and social systems are dynamic and inextricably linked” (http://www.nobel-cause.de/stockholm-2011/download/Executive_summary.pdf). Instead of the expression “man and biosphere,” the Nobel laureates were speaking and writing gender-correctly about “people and ecosystems.” The 40 years in between show the pioneering role of UNESCO’s MAB program, which strongly encouraged interdisciplinary thinking and working.

Early in the 1970s, Jack and I were invited to Salzburg, Austria, to develop a proposal for a national or regional program somewhere in the mountains of the world. We can thus say that we were present at the start of a new interdisciplinary and globally important mountain program—especially Jack, who attended the first mountain MAB meetings, in 1974 in La Paz, Bolivia, for the Andes, and in 1975 in Kathmandu, Nepal, for the Himalayas.

Jack Ives and I met for the first time in 1972, when the Congress of the International Geographical Union in Montreal, Canada, was preceded by a 1 week excursion to the Canadian Rocky Mountains for members of the Union’s Commission on High Altitude Geocology, founded in 1968 by Carl Troll from Bonn, Germany, who in our time was the most famous mountain specialist doing research both in and outside Europe. Jack spent a sabbatical leave

with his family at Appenberg, Emmental, Switzerland’s hilly region (Figure 1), and reinforced—as guest professor—the links between his own geography department and the Geographical Institute of the University of Bern. Appenberg became the place where many meetings of the international Mountain Agenda group took place. This is where we prepared a number of the Mountain Agenda’s global policy recommendations, decided on who would attend what conference, debated about key mountain research issues, and planned several Mountain Agenda Series publications. This series successfully raised awareness of the importance of mountains among the global community.

The most important event happened in spring 1977, when Jack and I were both invited by Professor Walther Manshard of Freiburg, Germany, then vice rector–designate of the United Nations University, with its headquarters in Tokyo, to discuss a mountain research program. The program started in 1978 with the title “Highland–Lowland Interactive Systems.” In 1972, who would have thought that 6 years later, 2 United Nations agencies—UNESCO and the United Nations University—would be involved in our friendship program Rocky Mountains–Swiss Alps?

All the same, we both had some experiences outside the Rocky Mountains and the Swiss Alps. Jack Ives has provided an overview of his work in the last 25 years, including the mountains of Central Asia, the hills of northern Thailand, the Nepalese Himalayas, the Chinese Hengduan Mountains, and the Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan. I did research in the Atlas Mountains of North Africa in 1964, in Ethiopia in 1974–1976, and in Kenya in 1976–1977 on Mount Kenya with its glaciers on the equator. Together, we took part in the founding and inauguration of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in

FIGURE 1 Reminiscing about earlier times in Appenberg, Switzerland, in August 2014. From left to right: Bruno Messerli, Jack Ives, Pauline Ives, and Béatrice Messerli. (Photo courtesy of Nadine Ives)



Kathmandu in 1983, an organization for 8 cooperating countries. The founding of the African Mountain Association (AMA) happened in Addis Ababa in 1986, followed by mountain conferences in Morocco (1990), Kenya (1993), Madagascar (1996), Lesotho (2000), and Tanzania (2002). Shortly before the beginning of the famous year 1992, which hosted the Earth Summit and Agenda 21, Jack, Hugo Romero, and I founded the Andean Mountain Association (AMA) in Chile in 1991, with mountain conferences in Bolivia (1995), Ecuador (1998), Venezuela (2001), and Argentina (2005). The existence of these 3 organizations, representing almost the whole developing mountain world, was the most important argument in upcoming discussions and decisions

about sustainable mountain development on a global level. To indicate the importance of mountain areas, more than 1.3 billion people live in the 10 most important watersheds—highlands and lowlands—of the Hindu Kush–Himalaya–Tibet.

A short overview of our mountain work together: We participated in preparatory meetings for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (3–14 June 1992), I with the support of the Swiss diplomatic corps in Geneva in autumn 1991 and Jack in New York in spring 1992. We both were present at the Earth Summit and proud of the great achievement of having a chapter on mountain issues included in the summit's action plan, Agenda 21, chapter 13, “Managing Fragile

Ecosystems—Sustainable Mountain Development.”

This had the following consequences: an International Year of Mountains, 2002, with the final conference in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; the International Mountain Day, now celebrated on 11 December every year; and, most important, 10 mountain resolutions adopted in the United Nations General Assembly between 1998 and 2014. In recent years, these resolutions have always had the title “Sustainable Mountain Development” and cover more than 20 paragraphs. The resolution of 12 February 2014 contains the following good advice for future generations: Paragraph 21 encourages states and all stakeholders to give appropriate consideration to the issues of

sustainable mountain development in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda, and paragraph 22 asks the secretary-general to report to the General Assembly at its 71st session on the implementation of the present resolution under the subitem “Sustainable mountain development” of the item titled “Sustainable development.”

Jack Ives had a special relation to Maurice Strong, the Secretary General of the Earth Summit 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. In 1982 and 1986, Jack organized 2 conferences in the Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, New York. The second

conference had the title “The Himalaya–Ganges Problem,” and he invited Maurice Strong to be the honorary chairman. We remembered his keynote address on the official foundation and inauguration day for the International Centre of Integrated Mountain Development in Kathmandu on 1–5 December 1983.

In honor of Jack Ives, and with all my heartfelt congratulations and thanks for a lifelong friendship, I close with a quotation from Maurice Strong’s keynote address in 1983: “Mountain regions not only represent the most spectacular and

beautiful of the ecosystems which make up the environment of our ‘Only One Earth,’ but are indispensable to the survival and well-being of a substantial portion of its inhabitants.”

AUTHORS

Bruno Messerli

bmesserli@bluewin.ch

*Professor emeritus, Institute of Geography,
University of Bern, Hallerstrasse 12, 3012
Bern, Switzerland*

Open access article: please credit the authors and the full source.