

The Jamie Smith Memorial Award for Mentoring in Ornithology

It is with great pleasure that the Society of Canadian Ornithologists presented the 2007 Jamie Smith Memorial Mentoring Award to:

Dr. Robert G. (Bob) Clark
Research Scientist, Environment Canada
Adjunct Professor, University of
Saskatchewan



Bob's nominators indicated that he displayed many of the attributes that Jamie himself displayed – despite being described as very patient, Bob is still able to gently push students and colleagues to achieve work they didn't even realize they were capable of. All spoke of Bob's ability to guide others to discover the answers to their own questions, rather than simply providing the answers. Almost all of the nominators remarked that once Bob has taken you under his wing, you are made to feel "part of the family" and many of his mentees highlighted the importance of the social experience (lab barbeques etc) of working with Bob complementing their scientific experience.

Although these characteristics were shared by many of the nominees, several factors made Bob's nomination outstanding:

1. The first was the tremendous outpouring of support for the nomination - we received a total of 28 letters for Bob. This included persons from: provincial government; federal government; Parks Canada; Ducks Unlimited, Bird Studies Canada and several other NGOs; consulting biologists in industry; vets; academic faculty; students at the undergraduate and graduate level. Bob's nominators covered almost every facet of Canadian ornithology.
2. Strikingly, many of the nominators were not even Bob's students, but rather Bob served on their supervisory committees. It is one thing to be named by your students, but it is extremely strong recognition of mentoring ability to be named by people on whose committees you simply participated!

3. Among the letters from persons that Bob did supervise, we had nominations from former students as well as current ones. It is quite an accolade to have in-progress students being this supportive. Often appreciation of one's abilities to draw the best out of people comes in hindsight.
4. Another very important attribute that Bob demonstrated by word and deed is the importance of life-work balance which is a key trait in these burn-out times.
5. One letter, however, neatly summarized the influence that Bob had on their lives – the nominators named their child after him.

On behalf of the award committee, I would like to congratulate Bob on his achievements and encourage others to consider making nominations of supervisors and peers for next year's awards.

Ken Otter, Chair,
Jamie Smith Memorial Mentoring Award Committee