

Ob Merita Egregia*

Amongst the awards instituted by the International Cartographic Association (ICA) is the Carl Mannerfelt Gold Medal. First awarded in 1980 to the “dean of European cartographers” Prof. Imhof of Switzerland, this medal is the highest honour in world cartography, commemorating the founder of the ICA, Prof. Mannerfelt of Sweden. Two new recipients were awarded the medal in 2005, joining a select band of only eight other individuals: this award is highly prized and not bestowed lightly. The two most recent and deserving recipients are Prof. Ernst Spiess (Switzerland) and Prof. David Rhind (UK), both of whom received the acclaim in A Coruña last July of the International Cartographic Conference, accepting their medals from the ICA President, Dr Milan Konecny.

Each was also honoured by their home cartographic societies. The Autumn Conference (Herbsttagung) of the Swiss Society of Cartography in November 2005 included a session devoted to the life and work of Prof. Spiess (see website below). His achievements, as summarised in the ICA citation, include “contributions in topographic mapping, atlas production, technological advancement, and to effective teaching and research.” In 1974, at the Institute of Cartography at ETH Zurich, he introduced one of the first digital cartographic computer systems, which became a basic tool for advanced scientific work on map production, thematic cartography and map projections, and also adapted and extended Bertin’s “Graphical Semiology” to modern thematic cartography. It was fitting that, after laudation by ICA secretary-general Prof. Ferjan Ormeling, a review of the professional life of Prof. Spiess was given by Prof. Lorenz Hurni, once a student of his and now himself director of the Institute of Cartography.

The British Cartographic Society (BCS) honoured Prof. Rhind at its Fellows Meeting in February 2006, and again the formal tribute was given by a former student of the recipient, Dr Seppe Cassettari, now president of BCS. Currently vice-chancellor of the City University, London, Prof. Rhind has an extraordinary record of public service with a range of UK committees and organisations, along with a lifelong international commitment to the science of geographic information handling. His cartographic pedigree was honed at the world-leading Experimental Cartography Unit in London in the 1970s, and came to the fore in his subsequent academic career and his enlightened leadership of the British Ordnance Survey during the 1990s. His ICA citation further describes him as “a keen thinker within the field, in recent years concentrating on the position and role of cartography in the Information (or Knowledge-Based) Society.” He is also a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of this magazine.

The website for more information regarding Prof. Spiess is at www.cartography.ch/archiv/2005_herbsttagung/galerie/galerie.html.

A range of other awards (ICA Honorary Fellowships and Diplomas for outstanding service to ICA) are occasionally conferred on individuals who have contributed to the development of cartography and the prominence of ICA. ICA is proud of those listed under “ICA Awards” at www.icaci.org.

* This is the inscription on the ICA Mannerfelt medal, an approximate translation being “for outstanding merit”.