

Achievements In Earth Remote Sensing Recognised

NASA and the US Department of the Interior presented the 2011 William T. Pecora awards to Alan H. Strahler, professor of geography and environment at Boston University, and to the Canada Centre for Remote Sensing at a ceremony held on Tuesday 15th November 2011 in Herndon, USA. Strahler was recognised for his contributions to remote-sensing science, leadership and education, which have improved the fundamental understanding of the remote-sensing process and its applications for observing land surface properties. The Canada Centre for Remote Sensing received the group award for outstanding collaboration across national boundaries.

The awards were presented at the Pecora 18 Symposium by Michael Freilich, director of NASA's Earth Science Division in the Science Mission Directorate and Lori Caramanian, Department of the Interior's deputy assistant secretary for water and science.

Strahler's early theoretical contributions in describing the interactions of light with forest trees led to realistic and quantifiable approaches employed today in many areas of remote sensing. Strahler also advanced the field of image analysis by developing new methods for incorporating spatial information. His innovative methods for incorporating spatial information such as size, shape, and texture in the interpretation of remotely sensed image data were important in the coupling of remote sensing with geographic information systems.

The Canada Centre for Remote Sensing was recognised for advancing the understanding of Earth over a period of 40 years through the development of important technologies and innovative applications.

The centre contributed substantially to the success of global remote-sensing technology through partnerships with many different groups, domestically and internationally. As a national remote-sensing program, the centre served as a model for numerous other countries where visiting scientists learned advanced remote-sensing science and how to organise a national remote-sensing programme.

NASA and the Department of the Interior present individual and group Pecora Awards to honour outstanding contributions in the field of remote sensing and its application to understanding Earth.

The award was established in 1974 to honour the memory of William T. Pecora, former director of the US Geological Survey and undersecretary of the Department of the Interior. Pecora was influential in the establishment of the Landsat satellite program, which created a continuous, nearly 40-year record of Earth's land areas.