

Celebrating Excellence

Professional organizations, such as NAGT, seek to serve their membership in a variety of ways. In my mind, the three most significant goals of NAGT are the following: promoting high-quality geoscience education at all academic levels; providing a forum for professional dialog on the topic of geoscience education; and celebrating outstanding contributions to geoscience education. Towards the first two of these ends, the Association sponsors workshops, theme sessions, the NAGT-AGU lab manual, and the Journal. In this space, I would like to draw additional attention to the ways in which the Association publicizes and celebrates the achievements of its members. As members, we are obligated to support these efforts by congratulating the winners of the various awards and scholarships as well as providing the nominating committees with the names of highly qualified individuals. In many ways, our awards are defined by the people we select to receive them. As such, I encourage all members to seriously consider nominating deserving individuals for all of the awards and scholarships listed below.

Neil Miner Award – This award is given annually to a college-level professor for exceptional contributions to the stimulation of interest in the earth sciences. This prestigious award was established in 1952 by the officers of NAGT in posthumous honor of Neil A. Miner. The award commemorates Neil Miner's concern for personal excellence and effective teaching. His ideals, his notably unselfish outlook on life, and his personal philosophy inspired his fellow teachers as well as his students.

James Shea Award – Each year the NAGT presents the Jim Shea Award to an individual for exceptional contributions in the form of writing or editing of Earth Science materials (broadly defined) that are of interest to the general public and/or teachers of Earth Science. Established in 1991 in honor of James H. Shea, long-time editor of the

Journal of Geoscience Education, the Award commemorates Jim's long-standing commitment to promoting high-quality geoscience education by publishing the best ideas for effective and innovative teaching.

Outstanding Earth Science Teacher Awards –

This award program was adopted by NAGT in 1971. Devised to honor pre-college teachers of earth science, the program has the following specific objectives:

- Identify excellence in teaching
- Appropriately recognize and reward excellence in teaching
- Stimulate higher levels of teaching performance
- Establish NAGT as a strong support organization for pre-college education, and
- Via active statewide and sectional programs, build a solid state, regional, and national liaison with administrators of pre-college earth science education.

Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards – Up to thirty awards are given to outstanding teaching assistants, half to undergraduate TAs and half to graduate TAs. Nominations are made by the department chair or faculty coordinating the teaching assistants.

Summer Field Scholarship Program – NAGT provides scholarships to students attending summer field camps in the geosciences. Selection is based largely on student essays and letters of recommendation in which achievement in geoscience, probable success in the field course, and financial need. Gender, ethnicity, geographic distribution and home institution are not considered. Awards are available for advanced undergraduate students with a GPA of 3.0 or better. Students must attend a summer field course in geology that is at least four weeks in duration and that engages the student primarily in field work, rather than classroom work.
