

THE BERRY MEDAL FOR 1991 TO RICHARD A. ALCOCK

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The success of the Mineralogical Association of Canada is due in large part to the volunteer efforts of the many mineralogists who give freely of their time. The Leonard G. Berry Medal was inaugurated in 1987 in order to recognize one of our members who has made a particularly distinguished contribution to the Mineralogical Association of Canada.

I am honored today to present the 1991 Berry Medal to Richard A. Alcock. Dick was raised in Ottawa, and his interest in geology and mineralogy was strongly influenced by his father, F.J. Alcock, who trained as a paleontologist, worked at the Geological Survey of Canada, and became curator and director of the National Museum. Dick attended Glebe Collegiate in Ottawa and went on to Carleton University, where he received his B.Sc. in Geology in 1958. He then went to the University of Toronto, where he received an M.Sc. in 1961. After graduate studies, he started his long career with Inco as a research geologist, working on nickel sulfide ores and nickel laterites. He helped develop XRF methods for analysis of geological materials and other chemical methods in the Assay Lab at Copper Cliff. He has been in charge of a number of exploration groups and has been heavily involved with the research laboratories at Inco.

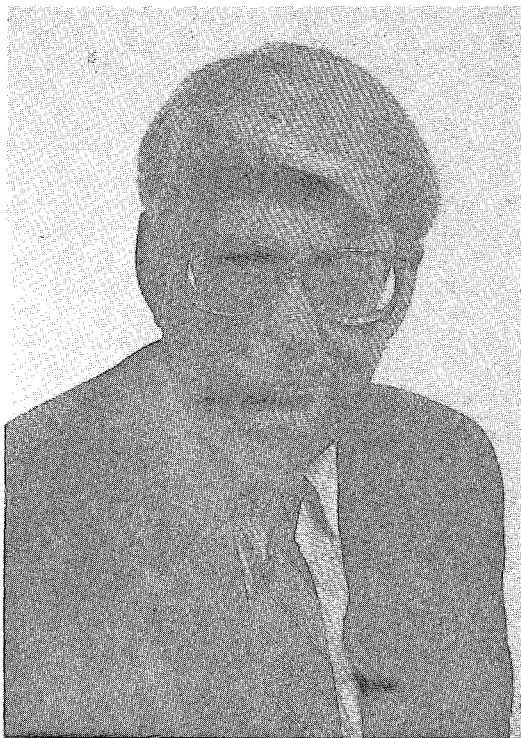
Today, we are recognizing his distinguished and varied service to the Mineralogical Association of Canada. He was a member of MAC Council from 1971 to 1974 and was elected Vice-President in 1978 and then became President in 1980. His most lasting contribution to the Mineralogical Association of Canada was probably as chairman of the Finance Committee. As stated by a previous recipient of the Berry Medal, "I was privileged to spend many hours with Dick preparing applications for NSERC publication grants and budget proposals. To an academic such as me, this was a real learning experience. Many things impressed me as I "sat at the feet of the master" during such sessions, not the least of which was Dick's firm belief that we should not be asking for government money just because it was there. He firmly believed that we should manage our money with such great care that we eventually would become totally independent of any outside financial assistance."

Dick has also been described as very business-like and methodical when approaching a financial problem; he seemed to have a clear idea where the MAC was going and he was willing to "stay the course". Many of these attributes are just those that we academics commonly lack. We either have

our head in the sand or in a cloud, but rarely in between. Thus we desperately need someone like Dick who can set a plan and see it through to completion. The way was not always easy, since many in our organization thought of a budget as something to present and forget, whereas Dick tried to use the budget as a trail through the financial "jungle" that could threaten a small organization like ours.

It gives me great pleasure to thank Dick Alcock on behalf of the members and present him with the Berry Medal.

Peter L. Roeder
Vice-President



RICHARD A. ALCOCK

Peter, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for those extremely kind words. I am very pleased and flattered to know that the Selection Committee believes that my contributions to MAC rank anywhere close to those of Ron Graham, Les Nuffield, Guy Perrault and Joe Mandarino, the previous recipients of the Berry Medal.

It was in fact Ron Graham, whom I knew through our mutual interest in nickel, who approached me back in 1975 and asked if I would come on to the MAC Council as an executive member for a 3-year term! Little did I know how MAC measured time and what was in store down the road. This was a very exciting period in the life of MAC, because the Council had decided to pursue a bold initiative, which was to put on a short course at the 1976 annual meeting in Edmonton. None of us could possibly have foreseen back then how much that decision would affect the direction and financial well-being of MAC down the road. There were many concerns to deal with in connection with this undertaking; however, the most serious ones related to the finances. It soon became very apparent that sponsoring a short course and printing up the notes in handbook form involved considerable sums of money – something MAC did not have a lot of in those days, particularly in light of the cost increases we were experiencing in publishing *The Canadian Mineralogist*.

It was in this period of financial instability that Louis Cabri, who was then coeditor of *The Canadian Mineralogist*, suggested to the Council that a Finance Committee should be appointed to examine and make recommendations to solidify the finances of both the Association and *The Canadian Mineralogist*. He rightly feared that our journal, which had a justly earned, worldwide reputation for high quality and level of service to its authors and subscribers, was in danger of being severely cut back as a result of this monetary squeeze. It sounded like a good idea to me, and I was quietly preparing to raise my hand in support as soon as the vote was called, when all of a sudden I heard my name mentioned, and before I could react, the vote was taken, the committee approved, and I was its chairman.

Fortunately, my fellow committee members were all extremely knowledgeable and experienced core-group persons in MAC. They were Joe Mandarino, my patient mentor over the years, who was then Business Editor of our journal, but who has worn virtually every hat in this Association over his long period of service, Ann Sabina, our long-serving and so efficient treasurer, and, last but not least, Bob

Gait, who did so much behind-the-scenes work as Circulation Manager. Our committee approached the problem with some very radical economic thinking, namely “We cannot continue to spend more money than we take in”. This fundamental economic premise that we all apply in our own households led to the discovery and adoption of a variety of cost-cutting and revenue-generating measures, which enabled MAC to achieve its desired goals and at the same time balance its budget. Both NSERC and GSC helped us out with generous grants in our time of greatest need, and continued over the years to financially support the publication of *The Canadian Mineralogist*. The policy decision that gave me the greatest pleasure over my time on the Finance Committee was that as the Association continued to become more and more stable financially, we progressively increased MAC’s contribution to the cost of publication, thereby relying less and less percentage-wise on government for support. Our belief was that we should draw from the public purse only as much as essential, not what the traffic might bear.

It was very gratifying to watch the Association’s real assets steadily climb from the precarious level of \$25,000 in 1976 to the lofty height of \$285,000 in 1988. There was no single person, action or reason responsible for this success. The credit belonged to many, but in particular to: firstly, the short-course organizers and presenters, who put together such good handbooks that we kept selling them out; secondly, the hard-working local organizing committees, who consistently put on such technically interesting and financially successful annual meetings over those years, and lastly, the diligent, far-sighted and innovative group of people that served on the MAC executive and its associated offices and supporting committees, whom I was privileged to know and to work with over my 13 years in the ranks of the MAC Volunteers.

I’ve mentioned a number of people who played key roles in the areas I was most involved with, but there is one more name I would like to include and that is Murray Duke, who provided such wise council as MAC secretary during my term as president, and later as a member of the Finance Committee.

The strength of any organization is directly proportional to the extent to which its members give of themselves to that organization. MAC’s vigor and success over the years are undisputed testimony to that. In honoring me today, you are acknowledging the dedication and stewardship of many. I thank all of them, and I thank all of you.

Richard A. Alcock