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The American Geographical Society Awards 2023 George Davidson Medal to Dr. D. James Baker

Description: The George Davidson Medal, awarded by the American Geographical Society (AGS), is one of several prestigious awards given by the Society. Dr. D. James Baker, senior strategic advisor for the Clinton Climate Initiative of the Clinton Foundation, received the prize during the AGS Fall Symposium, held November 16-17, 2023 in New York City, NY.

[New York City, NY] - [December 29, 2023] — The American Geographical Society (AGS) presented Dr. D. James Baker, senior strategic advisor for the Clinton Climate Initiative of the Clinton Foundation, with the 2023 George Davidson Medal for research in the Pacific area. AGS Vice President and Chair of the Honors and Awards Committee, Dr. Deborah Popper, remarked, “Baker’s contributions are as distinguished by their scientific brilliance as by their social and institutional importance…Baker’s qualities of mind and character have given him a major role in preparing us to face the ongoing and rising threats to the planet.” This medal was presented on Friday, November 17, 2023 during the Society’s annual Fall Symposium held in New York City, NY.

The AGS partly grew from a deep love of ocean exploration. The George Davidson Medal reflects this passion. This medal seeks to recognize the “...exceptional achievement in research for exploration in the Pacific Ocean or the lands bordering therein.” The medal is named after George Davidson, an American geodist who explored the western United States and Alaska, as well as the Pacific waters. He is primarily remembered for his 1907 paper The Discovery of San Francisco Bay. The medal was established by Davidson’s daughter in 1946.

Dr. Baker is the senior strategic advisor for the Climate Initiative of the Clinton Foundation. He served from 1993 to 2001 as Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and was the longest-serving administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Then, he went on to become president and CEO of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Before that he was president of Joint Oceanographic Institutions; first dean of the College of Ocean and Fishery Sciences at the University of Washington, Seattle; and he taught and conducted research at Harvard University. He has served on dozens of National Research Council (NRC) committees. He is a member of the American Philosophical Society, a fellow of the American Meteorological Society and American Association for the Advancement of Science, and he co-founded and was the first president of the Oceanography Society. He has led oceanographic expeditions to many parts of the world and shares a patent for a deep-sea pressure gauge.

The AGS is a 21st-century learning society dedicated to the advancement of geographic thinking, knowledge, and understanding across business, government, academe, social sectors, and most importantly with teachers and students. The vision of AGS is to be the foremost champion of geography for the benefit of society. The mission of AGS is to convene a diverse global community of innovators, thinkers, and practitioners; create and curate geographical knowledge, learning, and exploration; and advance geographic knowledge and technologies to address society’s challenges and opportunities. Established in 1851, AGS is the oldest professional geographical organization in the United States and is
recognized worldwide as a pioneer in geographical research and education. AGS seeks to engage the American public, from its youngest to its oldest citizens, with new and amazing ways to understand and characterize our changing world. The Society maintains its headquarters in New York City.

Dr. D. James Baker

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