

Acharius Medallists

James D. Lawrey

The Acharius Medal, awarded by the IAL, honours outstanding lifetime achievements in lichenology. This year's Acharius medal was awarded to James D. "Jim" Lawrey, during the virtual meeting of the 9th International Association for Lichenology Symposium (IAL9) on August 6th, 2021, in Brazil. Jim will also celebrate his 72th birthday on December 15th this year.

Jim's scientific career now spans 48 years, having obtained his master's degree in 1973 from the University of South Dakota, working on floodplain plant ecology. He obtained his MSc at only 24 years old, starting a textbook career any student would dream of. Just four years later, at the age of only 28, he received his doctoral degree from Ohio State University — on plant, lichen and fungal communities in an abandoned coal mine — under the supervision of the late Emmanuel Rudolph. He was immediately (1977) appointed to a full-time position as Assistant Professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, advancing to Associate Professor in 1982 and Full Professor in 1993. Only two years after receiving his PhD, in 1979, he published a paper as first author in *Science*, with the late Mason Hale as co-author (Lawrey, J.D., Hale, M.E. 1979. *Lichen growth response to stress induced by automobile exhaust pollution. Science 204: 423–424.*). His doctoral thesis resulted in no less than eight swiftly published papers in various international journals, including Canadian Journal of Botany, Environmental Pollution, and Mycologia, among others.

Jim has had an extraordinary breadth in his scientific approach, being a trained ecologist encompassing plants, fungi, lichens, and animals. This is well-documented through his numerous publications, including plant and fungal community ecology, lichen biomonitoring, lichen-animal interactions, chemical biology of lichens and lichenicolous fungi, and the evolution of lichens and lichenicolous fungi. He has set standards in the experimental approach to the study of the biology of lichenicolous fungi and their interactions with their host lichens, particularly regarding secondary compounds as defense mechanisms. His contributions (mainly from the 1990s) on this topic remain largely unmatched, with few researchers having worked in this line of research since then.

Beginning with his first studies with Mason Hale on Plummers Island in the 1970s, Jim has been active in broad-scale lichen monitoring programs throughout North America during the past four decades, collaborating closely with the National Park Service. His work has been instrumental in setting up long-term monitoring studies using lichens in North America, a program still unique across the globe. With his successful, late-career NSF project on the evolution of basidiolichens in the *Dictyonema* clade, Jim has revolutionized our understanding of basidiolichen diversity and has put this unique group of lichens firmly on the map. This work is being continued by his latest PhD student, Manuela Dal Forno.

Apart from his scientific achievements, Jim's service to the academic and the lichenological community is exemplar. He has given countless university courses over more than 40 years to literally thousands of students, on all aspects of biology and lichenology, and was senior lecturer in two OTS tropical lichen courses, held in Costa Rica in 2007 and 2012. He has been a committee member for 27 graduate students, and the main supervisor of six of them. Those students unanimously consider him a supervisor of outstanding quality and dedication. In addition, Jim has served on the boards of many scientific societies, including the Washington Biologists Field Club (WBFC, including as President), the Botanical Society of America (BSA), the Botanical Society of Washington (BSW), the American Bryological and Lichenological Society (ABLS, including as President), the British Lichen Society (BLS, including as Associate Editor of *The Lichenologist*), and the International Association for Lichenology (IAL) for 35 years and counting. His ongoing tenure as Senior Editor of *The Bryologist* since 2012 has significantly raised the international standing of the journal, for which he developed a new, modern layout & raised the impact factor to temporarily well over 2.3.

For more details on Jim's career, including a selection of memorable photographs, see: Lücking, R., Dal Forno, M., Will-Wolf, S. 2019. *James Donald ('Jim') Lawrey: a tribute to a unique career in lichenology. Plant and Fungal Systematics 64: 117–135.*