

***James C. Knox, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
AAG Honors for Lifetime Achievement***

It is difficult to imagine what the subdiscipline of physical geography would look like today without the extraordinary contributions of James C. Knox, long-time Professor of Geography and Evjue-Bascom Professor-at-Large at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Jim turned the stomping grounds of his youth—the Driftless Area of southwestern Wisconsin—into a laboratory that provided far-ranging insights into the responses of river systems to climate variability and human intervention on time scales ranging from the Quaternary to the historical. Employing methods ranging from stratigraphy to geochemical analysis to the extraction of information from early land surveys—an approach he pioneered—Jim helped advance process-based approaches in geomorphology, even as he demonstrated how studies of earth-surface processes could yield insights into climate change—past, present and future. In the process, Jim became one of the most recognized, honored physical geographers of his generation.

Jim’s impact on physical geography—and geography in general—goes far beyond his body of scholarship. There is likely no living physical geographer who has produced more students who have gone on to assume positions of influence in the discipline than Jim—so much so that one often hears reference to the “Knox School.” And Jim’s pedagogic influence extends well beyond graduate education; he is widely known as an enthusiastic, demanding, and caring teacher who has sparked the interests of countless undergraduates through the years, including many who went on to pursue graduate work in geography.

Befitting a lifetime achievement honoree, Jim has also made extraordinary efforts to advance his discipline, university, and department. He has served as a National Councilor of the Association of American Geographers and an Associate Editor of its flagship journal. He has played leadership roles in the geomorphology subsections of two different disciplinary associations: the AAG and the Geological Society of America. And he has chaired the Department of Geography at his home institution and assumed a host of other responsibilities on the University of Wisconsin campus.

In recognition of his pioneering scholarly contributions in geomorphology, his extraordinary influence as a teacher and mentor, and his tireless efforts to advance the study of physical geography, and the discipline of geography more generally, the Association of American Geographers is pleased to confer Lifetime Achievement Honors on James C. Knox.