DISTINGUISHED MYCOLOGIST AWARD

The Distinguished Mycologist Award is one of the highest awards bestowed by the MSA, and it is designed to recognize individuals that have a truly distinguished career in the field of mycology in terms of either research or service.

DR. DONALD PFISTER

Dr. Donald H. Pfister received his B.A. degree in Botany from Miami University in 1967. Soon afterwards he moved to the lab of Dr. Richard Korf at Cornell University to study the systematics and taxonomy of discomycetes. He received his Ph.D. from Cornell in 1971. Immediately upon completing his degree, Don was hired as an assistant professor in the Department of Biology at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez. In 1974 he moved to Harvard University where he was hired as an Assistant Professor in Biology and also became the assistant curator of the Farlow Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany. Don received tenure at Harvard in 1980. In addition to serving as a professor and curator for the Farlow Herbarium, he has also served in a number of other important positions at Harvard over the years, including Dean of Kirkland House, Director of the Harvard University Herbaria, Dean of the Harvard Summer School, and Interim Dean for Harvard College. It is worth noting here that Don was popular enough as the Interim Dean for Harvard College that the students even started a Facebook fan page that was dedicated to him (https://www.facebook.com/pfisterpfans).

Don has been a true student of the Ascomycota throughout his career and he knows the discomycete fungi like few others. Don has a deep grasp of the taxonomic literature and the morphology of Pezizales and other apothecial ascomycetes that cannot be overstated. His papers range from historical overviews of a particular mycological topic or herbarium collection to type studies, phylogenetic analyses, and detailed monographs (e.g. *Pulvinula* in 1976, *Wynnea* in 1979, *Cookeina* in 2006). Don has published more than 150 papers in mycology, botany, and the history of these sciences. He is also the author of more than 80 taxonomic names, including a large number of taxa in the Pezizales such as the family Chorioactidaceae and the genera *Adelphella*, *Chaetothiersia*, *Kallistoskypha*, *Kompsoscypha* and *Scabropezia* as well as a large number of new species across many other genera. Although much of Don's early work focused on morphological taxonomy, he embraced the molecular era in the 1990's and his MSA Presidential address from 1997 remains a classic paper (Pfister 1997. Castor, Pollux, and the life histories of fungi – Mycologia 89: 1–23). This work used molecular data from ITS and 18S to elucidate the phylogeny and life history of Orbiliales and this was the first work to make direct links between a large number of anamorphs and teliomorphs within the Orbiliales. In the 2000's Don and his laboratory team generated critical data to expand our knowledge of the fungal tree of life. Their work focused mostly on the phylogenetic relationships in Pezizales, Orbiliales, and the Leotiomycetes (Pfister 1997, Hansen et al 2001, Zhong & Pfister 2004, Hansen et al. 2005, Hansen & Pfister 2006, James et al. 2006, Perry et al. 2007, Pfister et al 2008, Hansen et al 2013).

It is important to note that Don has managed the Farlow Herbarium as an important mycological resource since 1974. He has been the curator of this herbarium for 44 years – far longer than any previous steward. The Farlow is one of the preeminent mycological herbaria in the world and remains an important repository of some of the world's most important historical fungi specimens. The collection houses approximately 1.4 million specimens, including approximately 75,000 types. Curating a collection of this size requires constant vigilance and it is an important job because collections like the Farlow are windows into the past and are critical for all future taxonomic efforts to understand fungal biodiversity.

Despite his extensive administrative duties at Harvard, Don has maintained a busy mycology and botany teaching schedule and has run a productive lab group throughout his career. He has had an impressive record of external grant funding that stretches back to 1972, including at least 15 different National Science Foundation grants that have supported either his systematics research or projects related to the management of herbarium collections at Harvard. Don has also mentored a large number of scientists over the course of his career, including at least 7 PhD students, 9 visiting graduate students, 14 Master's students (as part of his participation in Harvard's continuing education Master's programs), and 7 undergraduates (all of whom

completed a senior thesis on a mycology topic) as well as innumerable visiting researchers who have come to the Farlow for varying lengths of time. Don has served as a research mentor to an impressive 16 postdoctoral researchers, including two of MSA's Distinguished Mycologists (Dr. Tim Baroni and Dr. Roy Halling). Although Don's main focus has always been on systematics of Ascomycota, the students, postdocs and visitors in the Pfister lab have also worked on a wide variety of other topics, such as lichens, insect-fungi interactions, plant pathogens, southern hemisphere biogeography and orchid mycorrhizal communities. Through his efforts with the Friends of the Farlow organization Don also helped to facilitate funding for more than 35 different scientists to visit the Farlow Herbarium and conduct research and herbarium studies. Don's teaching and mentorship were previously recognized by the MSA in 2008 when he received MSA's Weston Teaching Award.

Last but certainly not least, Don has provided longstanding and tireless service for the Mycological Society of America over the course of his career. He has been a stalwart supporter of the MSA and has served a number of important roles, including MSA President (1995-1996), MSA Secretary (1988-1991), MSA historian (1998-2003), MSA newsletter editor (1979-1982, notably more challenging during the pre-digital era!), MSA Council Member (1977-1978) and the MSA program chair for the 2018 International Mycological Congress.

CONSTANTINE J. ALEXOPOULOS PRIZE

Awarded annually to an outstanding mycologist early in their career. The nominees are evaluated primarily on the basis of quality, originality, and quantity of their published work.

DR. GREG BONITO

Gregory Bonito is internationally recognized for his research on fungal ecology and evolution. In addition to being one of the world's leading researchers on the ecology and systematics of truffles (Tuberaceae) Bonito is also recognized for his ground-breaking research on fungal interactions with bacteria and plants, including the recent discovery of endobacteria in the early diverging fungus *Mortierella*. Many mycologists agree that Dr. Bonito is a rising star whose research is transforming how we study of fungal biology.

Greg possesses a unique background that spans many fields of mycology, microbial ecology, and sustainable agriculture. This breadth of training may be a clue to Greg's natural ability to think "outside the box" during his Ph.D. studies and pursue several lines of study. Greg's interest in mycology was already keen when he studied ecology and sustainable agriculture at Appalachian State University, from where he received his B.S. in 1998. By 2001, Greg had earned a master's degree with David Coleman at UGA in soil ecology. Coleman is widely regarded as one of the world's leaders in soil ecology. At Georgia, Greg worked on several mycological projects, including grassroots community activism through shiitake cultivation (facilitated by UGA mycologist David Porter). After his MS, Greg worked as a research assistant for the Department of Energy at Las Cruces and Albuquerque, where he gained valuable experience in environmental sensing techniques used in ecological studies.

From 2003-2009, Greg entered the Ph.D. program in fungal ecology and systematics at Duke University where he quickly assumed lead role in many facets of the Vilgalys lab research on systematics, environmental genomics, and plant-fungal interactions. Greg's Ph.D. research addressed the molecular ecology and systematics of North American truffles in the genus *Tuber*. Greg collaborated with truffle experts from around the world (including Jim Trappe, a.k.a. the godfather of truffle taxonomy) to describe the phylogeny of truffles using multiple loci, and to apply this information for assessing global diversity of this ecologically (and economically) important group of fungi. From the beginning, Greg also reached out to the truffle cultivation community to develop scientific insights into truffle ecology and biology. Through collaborations and workshops Greg has also helped train numerous students in the application of molecular ecology for understanding truffle mycorrhiza ecology and cultivation, and has even published a book (with A. Zambonelli) on biology and cultivation of edible mycorrhizal fungi (not just truffles). From 2010-2013, Bonito was a postdoc in the Vilgalys lab where he interacted with environmental scientists from Oak Ridge National Laboratories to study the mycobiome of cottonwood forests. Greg's postdoc research featured several pioneering applications of soil-