

2013 Pecora Award for Ocean Remote Sensing Scientist

The US Department of the Interior's U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and NASA have presented the 2013 William T. Pecora Award for achievement in Earth remote sensing to Dudley B. Chelton, distinguished professor of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences at Oregon State University, Corvallis. Chelton was recognised on Wednesday 11 December 2013 for his contributions to ocean remote-sensing science, education and applications. The award was presented by Suzette Kimball, USGS acting director, and Michael Freilich, director of the Earth Science Division in NASA's Science Mission Directorate, at the American Geophysical Union meeting in San Francisco.

Chelton is a pioneer in the oceanographic use of satellite data to explore the role of the ocean in the Earth's climate system. His work has led to new hypotheses in ocean studies and has inspired many follow-up investigations by the ocean remote-sensing community, increasing the practice and appreciation of ocean remote-sensing.

After receiving a PhD in physics from the University of Colorado, Boulder, he moved to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in 1980 to analyse newly available data from Seasat. His 1981 paper in *Nature* demonstrated the ability of satellite instruments to make global observations of the ocean. Chelton moved to Oregon State University in 1983 where he established an ocean remote-sensing programme that has grown into national prominence. The comprehensive understanding of the technical and statistical aspects of ocean remote-sensing serves as the foundation of Chelton's major scientific discoveries. For over thirty years, he has led efforts to improve satellite-derived measurements of the four primary ocean variables that can be sensed remotely: sea surface height, surface winds, sea surface temperature, and ocean surface biological productivity.

Chelton is a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union and the American Meteorological Society and received a NASA Public Service Medal. Many of his 110 papers and book chapters have become standard references in his field.

The Department of the Interior and NASA present the Pecora Awards to honour outstanding contributions in the field of remote sensing and its application to understanding Earth. The award was established in 1974 to honour the memory of William T. Pecora, former USGS director and Interior undersecretary. Pecora was influential in the establishment of the Landsat satellite programme, which created a continuous, 40-plus-year record of Earth's land areas.

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