

James Snodgrass receives Instrument Society of America (ISA) Honor

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A San Diego designer of oceanographic instrumentation and equipment has been elected a Fellow of the Instrument Society of America (ISA), "for his distinguished achievements in marine instrumentation."

He is James M. Snodgrass, head of the Special Developments Division of the University of California, San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography. He will receive ISA's top honor at the Society's annual awards and honors luncheon in Chicago, September 12.

Another San Diegan, J. Walter Finch, president of Wavelabs, Inc., will be similarly honored.

Snodgrass served ISA in 1960-63 as a director of its Marine Sciences Division. In bestowing the Fellowship upon him, ISA said Snodgrass is "known for his design and construction of the first, successful, electronic deep-sea oceanographic instrument (an ocean-bottom sediment temperature gradient recorder); for his modification of the Savonius Rotor and its application to the measurement of ocean currents; for the design fabrication of deep-sea radiance and irradiance meters with extremely high optical sensitivity designed to telemeter essential parameters to the surface; and for his introduction of the concept of pressure-equalized instrumentation, including mechanical and electronic systems, into deep-sea instrumentation."

The ISA citation said Snodgrass is "considered to be an international authority on high-frequency radio telemetry." In 1966, he was honored by the National Telemetry Conference as "Telemetry Man of the Year" for his "outstanding accomplishments in telemetry technology, especially as they apply to his substantial contributions to the field of oceanography."

Since joining the staff of Scripps Institution in 1948, Snodgrass has been responsible for the design and development of many currently employed instruments that allow what have been described as striking advances in the science of oceanography.

His interests include electro-physiology, sonar, kinesiology, radio location, sound recording, deep-sea instrumentation, physiological acoustics, and underwater telemetry.

Snodgrass participated in Scripps Institution's Mid-Pacific Expedition to the Marshall Islands in 1950, and has firsthand working knowledge of the oceanographer's requirements for instrumentation which enables the rapid translation of a theoretical design into a practical sea-going instrument.

As the representative of the Federal government's Interagency Committee on Oceanography, Snodgrass was designated by the U.S. Department of State as the U.S. representative to the Working Group on Telecommunications of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in April, 1962. He has served since that time as chairman of the Working Group.

He was chairman of IOC's joint meeting of experts on Telecommunications, Oceanography, and Meteorology Concerning Oceanographic Radio Communication Requirements, held in Paris, in 1963.

For the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council, Snodgrass is a member of the Committee on Radio Frequency Requirements for Scientific Research, the Ocean Engineering Panel of the Committee on Oceanography, and the Panel on Gravitational Effects of the Space Science Board. He also served for two years as a member of NAS's Committee on Air-Sea Interaction.

For the National Academy of Engineers/National Research Council, Snodgrass is a member of the Panel on Instrumentation, Devices, and Communication of the Committee on Ocean Engineering.

He is a native of Marysville, Ohio, received his A.B. degree from Oberlin College in 1931, and studied at the University of Pennsylvania and at Harvard Medical School. Between 1932 and 1942 he taught at Oberlin College and for two years was affiliated with the Fertility and-Endocrine Clinic of the Free Hospital for Women, Brookline, Mass. Prior to joining Scripps Institution, he was a member of the technical staff, Division of War Research, Columbia University, 1942-43; research associate and field representative for the University of California's Division of War Research, from 1943-46; and chief engineer for the Dayton Acme Company of Cincinnati's motion picture and sound division for the following two years.

In addition to his ISA membership, he is also a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Acoustical Society of America, the Physiological Society of Philadelphia, Sigma Xi, the Marine Technology Society, and the American Institute of Biological Sciences.

He and his family reside in La Jolla.