

Scripps Public Lecture On Importance Of World War II Era To American Oceanography

Presentation Will Focus on Roger Revelle and Other Scripps Oceanographers

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The role of American oceanography during World War II, and some of the major oceanographers who contributed to that era, will be the topic of a public presentation on the campus of Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego.

On Thursday, Nov. 4, at 3 p.m., Ron Rainger, Ph.D., will present, "Roger Revelle, World War II and the Transformation of American Oceanography." The presentation will be held in Scripps's Sumner Auditorium, 8602 La Jolla Shores Drive, in La Jolla (one-half block south of Naga Way). The presentation is free and the public is invited (street parking only).

Rainger is being recognized with Scripps Institution's William E. and Mary B. Ritter Memorial Fellowship. The fellowship, which includes research funds and an honorarium, is awarded to a recognized scholar of marine science history and allows the recipient to spend time on the Scripps campus to interact with students and ocean scientists and to give a public presentation. The Ritter Fellowship was created through an endowment from Robert Cody, nephew of the institution's founding director, William Ritter, and the fellowship is named for Ritter and his wife, Mary. This is the ninth time the Ritter Fellowship has been awarded since 1990.

Rainger, a historian of science and technology, is a professor of history at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. He is currently taking leave from Texas Tech to serve as program officer of the National Science Foundation's Science Technology Studies Program, which supports research and related activities that contribute to understanding the social, cultural and intellectual dimensions of science and technology in the past and present.

Rainger's presentation will cover the role of renowned oceanographer Roger Revelle in the 1930s and 1940s. Revelle was associated with Scripps Institution for seven decades, from his years as a graduate student through his service as a naval officer, and as an oceanography professor and

Scripps director. Rainger will also describe the tremendous growth of Scripps during those years, and the influence of various other Scripps scientists, including Harald Sverdrup, Richard Fleming and Francis Shepard, as well as the overall impact of World War II on oceanography.

"My interest in the history of the marine sciences stems from my interest in the history of American science and technology in general," said Rainger. "I became particularly fascinated with Revelle's era since it clearly illustrates the changing character of American science in the mid-twentieth century. In those years oceanography underwent a transformation, changing from a small, isolated field of inquiry into a much larger activity and an important resource for the nation. Revelle played a pivotal role in that development, and as a result helped lead oceanography in new and different directions."

Rainger's research focuses on the relationship between government and science in the mid-twentieth century, with an emphasis on American oceanography. His work examines the ways in which political and military interests influenced research and development in oceanography.

"Receiving the Ritter Fellowship is a great honor for me," said Rainger. "It offers an important opportunity for me to talk with people outside my field about Revelle, Scripps Institution, and the role of oceanography in American science and American life. And it represents the kind of validation that every scholar seeks, an indication that the historical research to which they have devoted their lives is a worthy undertaking."

Rainger received a B.A. in history from Willamette University, an M.A. in history from the University of Utah, and a Ph.D. in the history and philosophy of science from Indiana University. He was a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania.

He has been awarded the Outstanding New Professor Award and the President's Excellence in Teaching Award from Texas Tech. He has received four National Science Foundation grants and a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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