

Lifetime Achievement Award
presented to

Robert R. Currie

by the Membership of the
Southeastern Bat Diversity
Network

On the Occasion of the
14th Annual Meeting

held

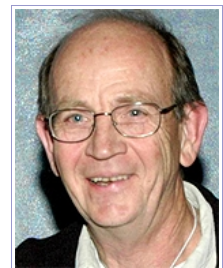
February 12, 2009

at

Arkansas State University
Jonesboro, Arkansas

The SBDN Lifetime Achievement Award has been given two times during the 14 year existence of our organization. In 1996 Dr. Wayne Davis, one of the authors of Bats of America, was presented the award by Dr. Michael (Mick) J. Harvey who, in 2003, would become the second recipient. These two men are biologists on whose shoulders you and I stand. Today we honor a third.

The person we honor today has championed the protection and recovery of endangered species, particularly bats and cave/karst systems, nationwide, for over 30+ years. With his arrival in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Asheville, North Carolina, office in the late 1970s, our friend and colleague Bob Currie became a pioneer in the cause of bat protection and recovery. Bob has been especially active in efforts to recover the Indiana, gray, and Virginia big-eared bats.



Partnerships to facilitate recovery goals have been the hallmark of Bob's conservation work. Particularly noteworthy are partnerships forged with professional and amateur cavers in the speleological community, The Nature Conservancy, Bat Conservation International, the American Cave Conservation Association, the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, the Office of Surface Mining, and many state wildlife conservation agencies. In many instances Bob's integrity and "people skills" enabled him to gain the trust of private landowners who had previously resisted cooperation with the *government*. Bob's efforts resulted in access to, inventory of, and long-term protection for many caves, mines and bats on private land.

Recognizing early on that human disturbance of caves was a major cause of population

declines of many cave-dwelling bat species, Bob worked with a variety of external partners to design and construct dozens of cave gates and fences throughout the U.S. Using volunteer labor to stretch limited Service funding to the maximum, Bob often acquired the necessary materials for construction, organized the workforce, and led dozens of cave and mine gate and fence construction projects. Bob has never been an 8-5 biologist and many of these projects were accomplished on weekends and outside regular duty hours when volunteers were more likely to be available.

In the realm of information and education, Bob has worked tirelessly to educate the public and other agencies about the importance and plight of our imperiled bats and their habitats. He has organized and given presentations at innumerable bat/cave conservation workshops throughout the country targeting teachers, school children, conservationists, and agency personnel. He has frequently been an invited speaker at training sessions hosted by other agencies and private conservation groups and has served as an instructor at many gate building workshops. And that sponsors frequently have offered to cover Bob's travel expenses for these events speaks highly of the value placed on Bob's participation. Bob was instrumental in the production of several highly acclaimed publications on bats, caves, and mines, including *Bats of the Eastern United States*, *Bats of the United States*, *Bats and Mines*, a Cave Gate Building Manual, and several posters on bats and karst resources.

Bob has represented the Service on the Indiana Bat Recovery Team, The Working Group for the National Cave and Karst Research Institute, the Executive Committee for the North American Bat Conservation Partnership, the Steering Committee for the Office of Surface Mining's Technical Forum on Gates, the Board of Directors for the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network, the Board of Directors of the American Cave Conservation Association, Scientific Advisory Board for Bat Conservation International and helped establish the Northeast Bat Working Group.

Bob was a member of the Bat Conservation and Mining Steering Group that received the Department of Interior's Environmental Achievement Award in 2003. In recognition of his leadership and many accomplishments in protecting bats and in education about bats, in 1995 Bob received the Distinguished Service Award from Bat Conservation International. He was honored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a Recovery Champion in 2002.

In his 30+ years of service Bob has exemplified a commitment to bat conservation deserving of Lifetime Achievement Award recognition.

We are lucky to know him, fortunate to call him friend and colleague, and humbled by his many achievements.

The majority of this text was provided by the Asheville Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Edited by and read during the award ceremony by David A. Saugey, U.S. Forest Service (photo at left).





Dr. Michael (Mick) J. Harvey (2003 recipient) on the left delivering a photo history presentation of Robert (Bob) Currie's (right) many achievements.



2003 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Dr. Michael (Mick) J. Harvey (left) with 2009 recipient Robert (Bob) Currie (right).



Left to right: 2003 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Dr. Michael (Mick) J. Harvey with 2009 recipient Robert (Bob) Currie, wife, Joy Currie and President of SBDN Matina Kalcounis-Rüppell.