

AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

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American Geographical Society Awards Cullum Medal to Dr. Lee Schwartz

Description: The Cullum Geographical Medal, awarded by the American Geographical Society (AGS), is the latest of prestigious awards to be made by the Society and is presented to the Geographer of the U.S. Department of State for distinguishing himself with geographic discoveries and for the advancement of geographic science. Dr. Lee Schwartz received the medal at the American Geographical Society's Geography 2050 Symposium at Columbia University on 19 November 2014 in New York City.

[New York City, NY] — [2 December 2014]—The American Geographical Society (AGS) awarded the Cullum Medal on November 19th at the Low Library, Columbia University during their inaugural event *Geography 2050: Mounting an Expedition to the Future*. Before a varied audience of AGS Councilors, geographic scholars and innovators, press and Columbia faculty, AGS Chairman of the Honors and Awards Committee Dr. Doug Sherman and AGS President Dr. Jerome Dobson presented the surprise award to Dr. Schwartz.

The Cullum Geographical Medal was established in 1896 and was the first medal awarded by the Society. It was founded through a bequest from Major General George W. Cullum, Commandant of the United States Military Academy, who was also an AGS Councilor and Vice President from 1874-1892. According to the terms of General Cullum's will, the medal is awarded "...to those who distinguish themselves by geographical discoveries, or in the advancement of geographical science." Even today, every cadet who graduates from West Point gets his "Cullum number" which follows him or her through an entire career.

Dr. Lee Schwartz is the Director of the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues of the U.S. Department of State. He assumed the position in 2005, to become the eighth Geographer since the position was first established in 1921. Before assuming his current mantle, he served as an Analyst for Refugees/Humanitarian Emergencies, as the Division Chief for UN and Humanitarian Affairs, and the Division Chief for Global Issues. Dr. Schwartz's current office is the official repository of the U. S. position on all national borders and sovereignty disputes. He has spearheaded the growth of personnel in the Office of the Geographer to its largest number since World War II, and oversaw the creation of the Humanitarian Information Unit – a unique interagency operation that coordinates US government information on complex emergencies. He has led State Department and broader governmental efforts on sharing and managing geographic information for complex emergencies such as Afghanistan and Syria and for natural disaster responses, such as the Pacific Tsunami and the Haiti earthquake. His office launched an international boundary verification process based on high resolution imagery and has designed and implemented participatory mapping initiatives related to humanitarian and environmental crises throughout Africa and elsewhere. Schwartz's broad areas of responsibility include topics as diverse as climate change, food and water security, wildlife and human trafficking, refugee flows, atrocities prevention, populations at risk, and human rights accountability. He was the winner of the State Department's Warren Christopher Award for Outstanding Achievement in Global Affairs.

Established in 1851, the American Geographical Society (AGS) is the oldest professional geographical organization in the United States. It is recognized worldwide as a pioneer in geographical research and education and has been awarding medals for outstanding accomplishments in Geography for over 117 years. The mission of the American Geographical Society is to link business, professional, and scholarly worlds in the creation and application of geographical knowledge and techniques to address economic,

social, and environmental problems. The Society's work serves to increase geographical knowledge and the recognition of its importance in the contemporary world. With members worldwide, the Society maintains its Headquarters in Brooklyn, New York.

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