

In memoriam - David Bruce Scott

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on behalf of

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In memoriam – David Bruce Scott

David B. Scott passed away on December 21, 2021 with his wife, Kumiko, by his side. Dave was an emeritus professor and past chair of the Department of Earth Sciences.

Dave was born in Oakland, Calif., to David Bernet Scott and Gladys King Scott on May 25, 1947. He grew up in the Pacific northwest (northern California and northwestern Washington State). Dave was a late bloomer. He almost failed grade two but liked school for its extracurriculars, such as the varsity cross country running team and parties. He eventually developed an aptitude for geology, earning his BSc. in Geology and Oceanography from the University of Washington and MSc. in geology from Western Washington University. After working in San Diego for a few years, he started a PhD program at Dalhousie University. He whizzed through his PhD in a record two years and became a faculty member in the Department of Geology, now the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences. He was a Killam Professor from 2005-2010 and served as departmental Chair from 2008-2011. Dave became the Director of the Centre for Environmental and Marine Geology in 2000. The centre began in the early 1970s and represented the growing field of marine geoscience, serving as a bridge between the Department of Geology and Institute for Oceanography at Dalhousie.

Dave's life's work focused on applying microfossils, especially the protistan group foraminifera, to study oceanographic and coastal change. He led many international projects in the Atlantic, the Pacific, and both polar regions. His pioneering paper published in 1978 in *Nature* described how former sea level positions could be precisely located within centimeters using foraminifera that are preserved in salt marsh sediment. This landmark advance introduced a whole new field to coastal science. It paved the way for modern scientific approaches that test and validate numerical models of sea-level change, and his method was the basis of modern similar work that was cited and tweeted by President Obama in 2015 and 2016, respectively. In addition, Dave played a prominent role to develop scientific interest in deep-water Atlantic corals, he studied the drivers of Arctic sea-ice cover, he extensively documented the deglaciation of eastern Canada, and he investigated the impacts of pollution on many coastal environments.

Dave's work appeared in over 140 peer-reviewed scientific papers and book chapters, helping him become an internationally respected geological oceanographer. In 2013 Dave received the Joseph A. Cushman Award, a prestigious lifetime achievement award recognizing his contributions to the field of micropaleontology. On a lighter note, he also enjoyed visiting many elementary schools in the province to give talks about dinosaurs and take young students to field trips to beaches to look for fossils. This dedication to students and their education was manifested in being voted professor of the year in 2006 by the department's undergraduate students.

He was a fantastic father and a husband. He loved to bring the whole family fishing, where he would exhibit levels of patience extending from untangling everyone's lines to paddling the canoe around the lake for hours in search of fish. He also took us on adventures around the world whether on

sabbatical or geological field trips to places including Argentina, Europe, the United States cross country, Bermuda, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Dave had an adventurous soul and imparted this feeling on everyone around him.

Dave leaves behind his wife, Kumiko; and children, Helen Scott-Davison (Tyler), Erica and Tarou, and grandchildren. Dave also leaves many “academic children”, previous students and postdocs, who often became extended family and joined us for dinners and drinks. Many current faculty members in many Canadian, American, and international universities were once mentored early in their career by Dave at Dalhousie University. He enjoyed frequent gatherings with long-time family friends, the Lunn and the Mathesons, whom helped him during many trips together after being diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. We would also like to thank all the care staff at Sullivan’s Lane, Parkstone, for providing such consideration and comfort in the last years of his life.

Dave’s appreciation for the people he surrounded himself with ran deep and thus his battle with Alzheimer’s and eventual passing also ripples through many. Dave will be missed by many and remembered for a long time to come. Due to the COVID restrictions, a celebration of his life is scheduled in the later date.



Dave Scott recovering a camera from an investigation of the seabed on the C.S.S. Dawson (March 1981).



Dave Scott and Tom Duffett repairing equipment and recovering vibracores used in foraminiferal analysis to examine the evolution of Sable Island (July 1981). Scott's research with forams deciphered the record of sea level change affecting Sable Island.



Dave Scott taking shallow cores in Halifax harbour to investigate pollution levels, using forams, with PhD student Saad Dabous. Dave "wrote the book" with Franco Mediolini on foraminiferal research for studying pollution in coastal estuaries and harbours.