

William Aubrey “Bill” Cobban

31th December 1916 – 21st April 2015

This volume¹ is dedicated to the memory of William Aubrey “Bill” Cobban, a great scientist and a great man, a giant of the US Western Interior Cretaceous studies and of ammonite paleontology. This is the collection¹ of contributions assembled by his friends, colleagues and followers. William A. Cobban died peacefully on April 21, 2015 at the age of 98.

Bill was born on December 31, 1916 in Anaconda, in Montana, and raised in nearby Great Falls. After



Bill Cobban on Pierre Shale
in South Dakota, in 2006

graduating from the University of Montana in Missoula, in 1940, he started working for Carter Oil Company (now Exxon Mobile). In 1946 he enrolled at John Hopkins University, and obtained his Ph.D. in 1949. He began his long career at the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in 1948 and maintained his position and connections to the Survey until shortly before his death.

During his long scientific life Bill published more than 300 papers on the ammonites and other molluscs, and stratigraphy of the Cretaceous, first of all of the US Western Interior, but also of the American Gulf and Atlantic coasts². He published a series of benchmark papers, including those on scaphitid ammonites of the Colorado Shale (his doctoral thesis topic); the cephalopods of the Mowry Shale (with J.B. Reeside); the biostratigraphy of the Pierre Shale (with Jim Gill); numerous papers on the biostratigraphy and ammonites of the entire succession at Pueblo (with Glenn Scott and Jim Kennedy); the general paper on ammonite paleobiology (with Jim Kennedy); the correlation of the Upper Cretaceous of the North American Cretaceous with that of Europe (with Jake Hancock and Jim Kennedy); on the Global boundary Stratotype Section and Point for the base of the Turonian Stage at Pueblo, Colorado (with Jim Kennedy and Irek Walaszczyk); on the Upper Cretaceous geochronology (with John Obradovich); on the Upper Cretaceous inoceramids (with Irek Walaszczyk and Peter Harries); on the unconformities in the Upper Cretaceous of the Western Interior (with Al Mere-wether)²; and many more.

For his monumental work Bill received many honors and medals, including Meritorious Service

Award (1974), the Distinguished Geologist Pioneer Award (1985), the Paleontological Medal (1985), the Distinguished Service Award (1986), the Raymond C. Moore Paleontology Medal (1990), the Gilbert Harries Award from the Paleontological Research Institute (1996), in 2004 he was honored during the 6th International Cephalopod Symposium for his studies on the Late Cretaceous ammonites of North America, and in 2006 he received the Dallas Peck Outstanding Scientist Award from the U.S. Geological Survey. Bill was honored by 4 genera of ammonites, 17 species of invertebrates, and one genus of fossil plant, named after him.

Bill was a generous and friendly man, ready to share his scientific knowledge and experience with his colleagues and friends. He always had time for amateurs, who enjoyed visiting him and learned so much from him.

Bill was among the most distinguished palaeontologists who worked for the United States Geological Survey. We all miss his advice and wisdom, and are honored to have worked with him.

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¹This memorial volume will appear in two parts; part 1 published herewith, and the second part, which will be published as the first issue of *Acta Geologica Polonica* for 2017.

²The complete list of Bill's publications (prepared by Neal L. Larson), is installed at www.geo.uw.edu.pl/agp; the list is not closed, as new papers, co-authored by Bill are in process of publication.