

Robert “Mac” West

Professional Preparation

University of Chicago, Ph.D., Evolutionary Biology, 1968

University of Chicago, S.M., Geophysical Sciences, 1964

Lawrence College, B.A., Geology, 1963

Appointments

1992 – Present, President, Informal Learning Experiences, Inc., Denver, CO.

1987-1991, Director, Cranbrook Institute of Science and Vice President, Cranbrook Educational Community, Bloomfield Hills, MI

1983-1987, Director, The Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, PA

1974-1983, Curator of Geology, Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, WI

1969-1974, Assistant Professor of Biology, Adelphi University, Garden City, NY

1968-1969, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of Geological and Geophysical Sciences, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

Experience

Informal education/experience projects

1. Lead Scientist, The Third Planet exhibition, Milwaukee Public Museum
2. Director for multiple permanent and temporary exhibition projects at The Carnegie Museum of Natural History and Cranbrook Institute of Science.
3. Intensive involvement in the development and programming of the Galapagos film for the National Museum of Natural History.
4. Assessment of and projections for the educational program of the National Aquarium in the District of Columbia
5. Participation in the development of the master plan for Brookfield Zoo
6. Over 100 consulting assignments with science, history, and environmental institutions across the United States
7. U.S. natural history museum representative to the Indo-US Subcommittee on Education and Culture
8. International consulting and speaking in China, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, New Zealand, Australia, India, Nepal, Israel, Finland, Belgium, Portugal, Denmark, Italy, Germany, Hungary, United Kingdom, Brazil, Singapore, South Korea, Brunei, Mexico, and Canada
9. Fulbright Senior Specialist on assignment to the Sri Lanka National Science Foundation, 2010

Career

Dr. West's career has had three distinct periods. Most recently, since 1992, he has owned and operated a Denver, CO-based consulting firm, serving clients including museums, zoos, professional association, government agencies, community-based organizations, and businesses concerned with the creation, development and sustainability of quality educational experiences for the broad public. Informal Learning Experiences, Inc., also publishes an independent bimonthly journal, *The Informal Learning Review*, and serves the museum industry by maintaining the largest searchable database of traveling exhibitions about largely science, natural history, technology history and anthropology topics.

From 1983 to the end of 1991, Dr. West directed The Carnegie Museum of Natural History and Cranbrook Institute of Science. During this time, in two quite different institutions, he supervised major exhibit installations, institutional self-studies and management reorganizations, and analyses of the most desirable and effective public programming. Vectors Pittsburgh recognized his contributions with their 1986 Man of the Year in Science award.

Dr. West's academic career, as a university professor and museum curator, extended from 1968 to 1983. After earning his PhD at the University of Chicago, he devoted a year to post-doctoral studies at Princeton University, followed by a five-year stint as Assistant Professor of Biology at Adelphi University. He then served as Curator of Geology at the Milwaukee Public Museum, where he was the lead scientist on a major, NSF-funded exhibition gallery, The Third Planet. During this time he operated externally-funded (NSF, National Geographic Society, Wenner-Gren Foundation, Arctic Institute) paleontology research projects in Southwestern Wyoming, Arctic Canada, and the Himalayan foothills of Nepal and Pakistan. These projects studied the evolution and biostratigraphy of Eocene mammals in the Green River Basin of Wyoming, documentation of the subtropical Arctic climate and final separation of North America from Europe about 45 million years ago, and the paleoenvironmental impact of the rise of the Himalaya throughout the Cenozoic. He was awarded the National Geographic Society's Arnold Guyot Memorial Award in acknowledgement of that research work.

In 2010 he was a Fulbright Specialist, working with the Sri Lanka National Science Foundation on the planning of that nation's first science center.

He reviews proposals for the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and has served as an accreditation reviewer for the American Alliance of Museums.

Dr. West is a member of the Explorer's Club, the American Alliance of Museums, the Association of Science-Technology Centers, the Association of Children's Museums, the Visitor Studies Association, the Society of Sigma Xi, the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, Downtown Denver Rotary Club, and the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology. He serves on the boards of the National Center for Science Education, dedicated to the promotion of evolution education in the public schools, and the Rocky Flats Institute and Museum, dedicated to interpretation of the Cold War nuclear manufacturing facility outside of Denver. For six years he was on the board of the Visitor Studies Association, devoted to understanding and improving the museum visitor experience.

Selected Bibliography

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