

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., Washington, DC, and, as of 2012, Denver, CO

1987-1991, Director and Vice President, Cranbrook Institute of Science and 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

Representative informal science 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. Development of master plan for the ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center, Burlington, VT
7. Conducted feasibility studies for emerging children’s museums in numerous states.
8. Provided content advice and consultation for the recently-completed Shanghai Natural History Museum, China
9. Over 100 consulting assignments with informal education institutions across the United States
10. U.S. natural history museum representative to the Indo-US Subcommittee on Education and Culture
11. International consulting and speaking in China, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, India, Nepal, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Finland, Belgium, Portugal, Denmark, Italy, France, Germany, Hungary, United Kingdom, Brazil, Mexico, and Canada
12. Fulbright Senior Specialist on assignment to the Sri Lanka National Science Foundation, 2010

13. Keynote speaker at the 2016 conferences of the International Symposium of Science Museums in Daejeon, South Korea and the Southern African Association of Science and Technology Centers in Richards Bay, South Africa

Dr. West's career has had three distinct periods. Most recently, since 1992, he has owned and operated a consulting firm based initially in Washington, DC, and since 2012 in Denver, CO, serving clients including museums, zoos, professional associations, 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 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 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 appointment 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, PL 480, 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. Upon relocating to Denver, he was appointed a Research Associate in Paleontology at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

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. In 2015, along with Dr. Per-Edvin Persson of Finland and Lesley Lewis of Canada, he conducted the Institutional Review of the National Museum of Thailand in Bangkok.

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 Rotary Club of Denver, the American

Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Sigma Xi scientific honorary society. Museum organizations include the American Alliance of Museums, the Association of Science-Technology Centers, the Association of Children's Museums, the Visitor Studies Association, and the mountain-Plains Museums Association. He currently serves on the board of the National Center for Science Education, a nonprofit dedicated to the promotion of evolution and climate change education in the public schools, and the Rocky Flats Museum, an emerging center for the interpretation of a Cold War site near Denver. He recently rotated off the board of the Visitor Studies Association.

Selected Bibliography

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