

2018 GEORGE LAWSON MEDAL – Category A (Outstanding Contribution)

Monsieur Jean Faubert, Doctorat Honoris Causa, Université Laval

Jean Faubert of Saint-Valérien-de-Rimouski, Québec, is this year's recipient of the Lawson Medal in recognition of his monumental contribution entitled *La Flore des Bryophytes du Québec-Labrador*. Exceeding 1,200 pages and written in French, this outstanding treatise with three volumes describing over 900 Canadian taxa was published in consecutive years, devoted to liverworts and hornworts (2012), Mosses Part I (2013) and Mosses Part II (2014). On the whole, it represents the defining scientific milestone of Jean's career. Being richly presented with keys, descriptions, line drawings and photographs, plus distribution maps, it is regarded as the most comprehensive work on Canadian bryophytes to date. This botanical exposition has been acquired not only by botanists in Canada and the United States of America, but in a dozen other countries as well.

This work represents a ground-breaking achievement for Jean, who became a self-taught specialist of bryophytes without any formal affiliation with a university or other research institution. Trained as a marine-vessel navigator at the Institut maritime du Québec in 1976, Jean later earned a certificate in administration from the Université du Québec à Rimouski in 1988, followed by a B.Sc. degree in Biology from the same institution in 1991. He was employed as a botanical consultant, initially interested particularly in aquatic vascular plants but then specializing in the bryology of wetlands. Located far from major herbaria, he familiarized himself with botany of the Rimouski region and amassed a private herbarium of more than 10,500 specimens.

Among his other activities that number over 60 peer-reviewed publications and reports centering on bryology, Jean in 2007 published his *Catalogue des bryophytes du Québec et du Labrador*, followed 3 and 4 years later with significant, multi-authored publications about new, rare and remarkable bryophytes occurring in this same territory. Together with his bryophyte colleagues, Jean annually organized for over 12 years a series of walks and short-courses on bryophytes (introductory and advanced levels) attended by hundreds of college and university students, other biologists, and interested amateurs. He also founded the *Société québécoise de Bryologie* and in 2011, initiated an online scientific journal, *Carnets de Bryologie*, outlets that have broadly transmitted the latest findings about bryophytes of Québec and Labrador. Moreover, Jean developed a globally significant website devoted to biodiversity, by production of a publicly accessible data bank of images (BRYOQUEL) pertaining to the bryophytes from boreal to Arctic in this vast peninsular region of Canada.

Among several recognitions for his distinguished work as a botanist and bryologist, Jean received Le Prix Georges-Préfontaine in 2012 from l'Association des Biologistes du Québec, and the Henry Allan Gleason Award in 2014 from the New York Botanical Garden. On June 11 2016, Jean was honoured with the distinction of *Doctorat Honoris Causa* from l'Université Laval.

This nomination received from Prof. Line Rochefort was comprehensively supported further by 11 botanists who are professors and curators from Alberta, Ontario, and Québec. Among their tributes, they described this work as “a truly outstanding contribution to Canadian botany”, and “as one that opens up the discipline to students of bryology at all levels of experience.” *La Flore des Bryophytes du Québec-Labrador* “fills an enormous gap in the documentation of the flora of Canada” and represents “a remarkable achievement synthesizing the precious knowledge of an expert that has dedicated his life to the discovery of bryophytes.”

It was a memorable telephone conversation with Jean when I informed him in May, 2018, about he being the 2018 recipient of the Lawson Medal. Jean is a gracious, humble individual with many talents outside bryology, including the mastery of six different types of saxophones which he played mostly with big-band jazz orchestras. Owing to his battle with a progressing terminal illness, it became clear that neither Jean nor his wife Cécile would be able to travel to the BOTANY 2018 conference in Rochester, Minnesota, U.S.A. in July. Accordingly, the CBA-ABC executive voted unanimously to break, in this instance, with the tradition of presenting the Lawson Medal at its annual summer meeting. I thank Prof. Emeritus Iain Taylor of U.B.C., Vancouver, BC, for expediting the engraving process for the medal and shipping it to l’Université Laval.

On behalf of the CBA-ABC, I also thank Prof. Line Rochefort and Prof. Robert Gauthier (former curator of l’Herbier Louis-Marie) of l’Université Laval who drove to Saint-Valérien-de-Rimouski, Québec on June 27, 2018. In a small ceremony, Jean was formally presented with the Lawson Medal at his home. We are also grateful to Cécile Faubert for the accompanying photograph of this event.

Respectfully submitted,
Art Davis, President