



THE WOODS HOLE RESEARCH CENTER

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GEORGE MASTERS WOODWELL

Biography

George M. Woodwell founded the Woods Hole Research Center in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, in 1985 and was its Director from 1985-2005. He is currently Director Emeritus and Senior Scientist at the Center.

Dr. Woodwell was born in 1928 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is a graduate of the Boston Public Latin School, holds degrees from Dartmouth College (AB, 1950) and Duke University (AM, 1956; Ph.D., 1958), and is the recipient of various awards and honorary degrees. He held a commission in the U.S. Navy between 1950 and 1953 and has held appointments and lectured at various universities. Between 1957 and 1961 he was assistant and associate professor of botany at the University of Maine in Orono. He joined the staff of the Biology Department of Brookhaven National Laboratory in 1961 and remained there until 1975 when he founded and became the Director of the Ecosystems Center at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, where he held various positions including Deputy Director of the MBL, Assistant Director for Education, and Distinguished Scientist. In April 1985 he founded the Woods Hole Research Center, an institute for global environmental research. For many years he held an adjunct appointment as Lecturer in Ecology at Yale University.

Dr. Woodwell's research has been on the structure and function of natural communities and their role as segments of the biosphere. He has worked extensively in forests and estuaries in North America and has made well-known studies of the ecological effects of ionizing radiation and the circulation and effects of pesticides and other toxins. He has, for many years, studied the biotic interactions associated with the warming of the earth.

He has published more than 300 papers in ecology and has contributed articles to *Science*, *Scientific American*, *BioScience*, *Nature*, *Ecology*, and the *Journal of Ecology*, among many. He has edited books on the effects of nuclear war, the global carbon cycle, biotic impoverishment, and satellite imagery used in measuring the area of forests globally. His books include *Forests in a Full World*; *Carbon and the Biosphere*; *The Earth in Transition: Patterns and Processes of Biotic Impoverishment*; and *Biotic Feedbacks in the Global Climatic System: Will the Warming Feed the Warming?* His most recent book, published in 2009, is *The Nature of a House: Building a World That Works*.

Dr. Woodwell is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is recipient of the 1996 Heinz Environmental Prize, the John H. Chafee Excellence in Environmental Affairs Award of 2000, and the Volvo Environment Prize of 2001.

Dr. Woodwell was President of the Ecological Society of America in 1977-78. He was a founding trustee and vice-Chair of the Board of the Natural Resources Defense Council, was a founder and remains an honorary member of the Board of Trustees of the Environmental Defense Fund, was a founding trustee of the World Resources Institute, and was a board member (1970-84) and Chair (1980-84) of the Board of Directors and later, a member of the National Council of the World Wildlife Fund. He was Chair of the 1982 Conference on the Long-Term Worldwide Biological Consequences of Nuclear War and is former Chair of the Ruth Mott Fund. He has served as a member of the Boards of Trustees of the Ocean Conservancy, Sea Education Association, and the Grand Canyon National Park Foundation. He currently serves on the advisory board of the Duke University Nicholas School of the Environment, and on the Boards of Trustees of the Woods Hole Research Center, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Amazon Institute of Environmental Research (Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia [IPAM]), and the World Media Foundation.