

Contact: Kent Laborde
(202) 482-5757

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Three from NOAA Receive Prestigious Recognition at White House

Three members of the NOAA Team have received 2003 Distinguished Presidential Rank Awards today at a White House ceremony. The award is the most prestigious recognition given to career government senior executives and scientists. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Each year, one percent of the federal government work force is honored with the distinguished award for being "strong leaders who achieve results and consistently demonstrate strength, integrity, industry and a relentless commitment to excellence in public service," as the citation states.

This year, the award recipients from NOAA are Susan Solomon, senior scientist with NOAA Research's Aeronomy Laboratory; Rolland Schmitt, director of NOAA Fisheries' Office of Habitat Conservation; and Scott Gudes, who served as deputy undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere.

"These honored colleagues helped to secure NOAA's claim to world-class excellence," said retired Navy VADM Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "I am proud of each one of them for their hard work and commitment to NOAA's mission."

Solomon is cited for her scientific contributions, particularly for her leading role in the international effort to discover the cause of the Antarctic ozone hole, and her research in evaluating the environmental impacts of newly proposed substitutes for the now-banned ozone-depleting compounds.

Schmitt is recognized as an international advocate for living marine resources. He has served as the U.S. commissioner to major international fisheries organizations under three presidents, helping to restore fish stocks and increased opportunities for U.S. fishermen. Also, he has been instrumental in actions leading up to the passage of the Highseas Driftnet Act.

Gudes has distinguished himself through his 24-year career in public service where he worked in numerous positions around government, including acting NOAA deputy administrator and acting NOAA administrator. Among his many accomplishments, Gudes championed ocean exploration and habitat restoration issues.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. To learn more about NOAA, please visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.