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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 22, 2010

Dr. Van Holliday honored with NOAA Environmental Hero Award

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has selected Dr. Dale Vance "Van" Holliday as one of its Environmental Heroes for 2010. The Environmental Hero Award honors individuals and organizations that volunteer their time to help NOAA carry out its mission.

Dr. Holliday was nominated posthumously for his contributions to NOAA's mission through his work in underwater acoustic techniques.

"Van was a pioneer in the design, acquisition and testing of new instruments and ways of using acoustics to understand the behavior and to estimate the abundance of marine life," said Dr. Steven Murawski, NOAA Fisheries' Director of Scientific Programs and Chief Science Advisor. "Equally importantly, he actively mentored young scientists, taking it upon himself to guide and support the next generation of marine bioacousticians, including many who now work for NOAA."

Dr. Holliday received his B.S. (1961) and M.A. (1965) in Physics from the University of Texas, Austin, and earned his Ph.D. (1972) in Applied Physics from University of California, San Diego (Scripps). Although a physicist by training, he became interested in the applications of underwater acoustics in oceanography and fisheries early in his career. He constantly sought projects in these areas because they were the "fun stuff" that his employers would let him do on the side. He was employed in the private sector, but worked closely with government and academic researchers throughout his career. He retired from BAE Systems in 2008 but remained on the faculty of both the University of Massachusetts and the University of Rhode Island.

Dr. Holliday was well known nationally and internationally for his scientific contributions, such as his role as a US representative to the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES). His work in ICES helped develop the standards for acoustically quiet research ships that are used in new ship construction, including a new class of fishery survey vessels being built for and deployed by NOAA. Dr Holliday passed away in February.

The award will be presented to Dr. Holliday's widow, Beth Holliday, at the ICES Fisheries Acoustics and Survey Technology Working Group Meeting in San Diego the week of April 26th. The meeting will have a mini-symposium to honor Dr. Holliday's vast contributions to ICES and fisheries science.

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