

PROVINCIAL GEOLOGISTS MEDALIST 2000

SEAN J. O'BRIEN



Sean O'Brien (right) receiving the Provincial Geologists Medal from the Honourable Tim Hudak, Co-chair of the Mines Ministers Conference and Minister of Northern Development and Mines for Ontario.

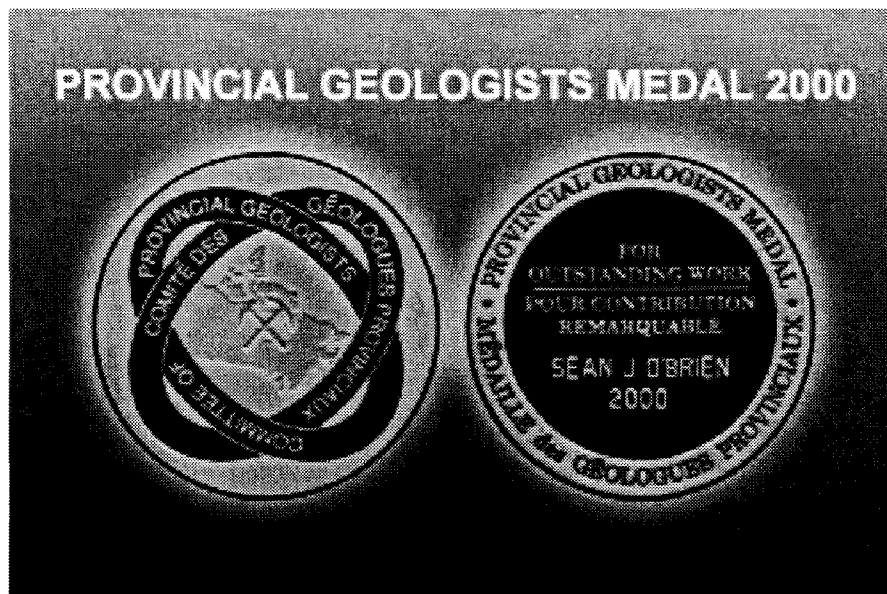
The Provincial Geologists Medal is awarded to recognize major contributions in the area of geoscientific research and related developments or applications that serve to meet the mandate of Canada's provincial and territorial Geological Surveys. Each Survey may nominate a candidate each year, and an external national selection committee representing industry, academia and the GSC chooses the recipient from the pool of nominees. For 2000, the winner of the Provincial Geologists Medal was Sean J. O'Brien of the Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador, a division of the Department of Mines and Energy, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The citation below was read by Dr. Andy Fyon of the Ontario Geological Survey and Chairman of the Committee of Provincial Geologists during the medal presentation at

the 57th annual Energy and Mines Ministers Conference in Toronto, September 12, 2000.

CITATION

Sean O'Brien is that quintessential Survey geologist: meticulous mapper, prodigious researcher and proficient communicator. In the more than two decades of dedicated work with the Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador, his breadth of achievements ranges from articulating aborted Proterozoic rifting to defining gold-bearing quartz veins in epithermal alteration zones. Through it all, he has published maps, reports and papers of exceptional clarity, and has effectively communicated his findings to a local, national and international audience.

Sean is acknowledged in Canada, Europe and the United States as one of the pre-eminent experts on the Avalon Zone of the Appalachian Orogen, that exotic piece of Gondwanaland that predates Iapetus. His mapping of the Avalon and Burin peninsulas has significantly contributed to our understanding of the Neoproterozoic tectonostratigraphic, paleoenvironmental and metallogenic evolution of Avalonia. Further, his careful work with



Obverse and reverse images of the 2000 Provincial Geologists Medal.

colleagues in the Hermitage Flexure area of southwestern Newfoundland has defined the chronology of Neoproterozoic to Silurian orogenesis in that region, and has redefined the extent of the Avalon Zone in the Newfoundland Appalachians.

Sean O'Brien has increased the effectiveness of his body of work through mutually beneficial partnerships with other researchers and geoscience agencies. University researchers in Britain, France, Spain and the United States are important collaborators. These alliances have furthered his and their understanding of the architecture of the Avalon Zone, including its potential to host mineral deposits. In the latter regard, and especially in recent studies of epithermal alteration zones, Sean has worked closely and successfully with the Geological Survey of Canada. In fact, these GSC-GSNL joint projects are commonly touted as a model for federal-provincial geoscience cooperation.

Equally important to Sean's role as a Survey geologist has been his dynamic support of Newfoundland's growing prospecting fraternity and junior exploration industry. He has proved to be a most patient mentor who deciphers the complexities of mineralization for eager acolytes, and inculcates a passion for mineral exploration in the novice and veteran alike. Many prospectors and geologists who have benefitted from Sean's tutelage have made important discoveries, and have pursued joint ventures and other avenues of property development. Now when they visit the offices of the Geological Survey, they can avail of a "prospectors resource room", another initiative co-led by Sean O'Brien to support mineral exploration in the province.

For his impressive body of scholarly work, for his several productive collaborations with government and university researchers, and for his untiring support of prospectors and mineral exploration, Sean O'Brien is eminently deserving of the 2000 Provincial Geologists Medal.