



American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) Honorary Member Award CITATION TO ABDULRAHMAN ALSHARAHAN

Citation-To Abdulrahman Alsharhan, a remarkable geologist and one of the most knowledgeable and prolific publishers on the geology of the Middle East, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the profession of petroleum geology in the Middle East and for his dedicated service to AAPG professional affairs through volunteerism on committees and as past AAPG Middle East Region President, his outstanding efforts to promote AAPG in universities and industry in the region.

Abdulrahman was born in the United Arab Emirates on September 15, 1954 and it was from here, he received his primary and secondary school education. He attended Cairo University and received a BSc in Geology in 1978. Following graduation, he was employed by Ministry of Petroleum in Abu Dhabi, and resumed his studies for MSs and PhD which he received in 1983 and 1985 from University of South Carolina, USA. In 1986, he moved into academia and joined United Arab Emirates University where he shared his gift of imparting knowledge, firstly as an Assistant Professor (1986-1990) teaching sedimentology and petroleum geology to undergraduate and graduate students, then as Associate Professor (1990-1995), and was promoted to Professor in 1995, becoming the first UAE national to hold this title and where he built his reputation for teaching, research, administration and consultancy.

During his 35 year tenure, Abdulrahman took key positions such as director of Desert and Marine Environment Research Center, Assistant Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty of Science. Under his directorship, the center and the college grew rapidly in size and program content, while maintaining its traditional reputation for excellence. It was during this period, that Abdulrahman's research took off and he was known for his perception, judgment and skills in projects related to the regional stratigraphy of the Middle East as related to the development and exploration for hydrocarbons using conceptual sedimentary stratigraphic model. His geologic interests broadened from his experience in coordinating special research projects of interest to the oil industry.

Abdulrahman's outstanding publications have provided a cachet few can match. He has more than 100 peer-reviewed publications and 120 abstracts on Petroleum Geology of the Middle East, many of them in AAPG Bulletin, Special Publications and Memoirs. He was a Reviewer for AAPG, Marine and Petroleum Geology, Middle East Geosciences Journal and Journal of Petroleum Geology. He has a wide reputation as an authority/lecturer in Petroleum Geology of the Middle East and recent and ancient carbonates and evaporites. He has published 8 books of outstanding reference related to hydrogeology, environment and Petroleum Geology of the Middle East, one of which requires special mention:

A.S. ALSHARHAN and Naim, A.E.M. (1997) "*Sedimentary Basin and Petroleum Geology of the Middle East*" published by Elsevier, contains the most comprehensive discussion on the

petroleum systems, stratigraphy and paleogeography of the Middle East. It is used by many universities such as Kuwait University, United Arab Emirates University and American University Beirut. Reviewers' comments are as follows: "A monumental book that contains a large and impressive compilation of all the stratigraphic data of the Middle East" (M.P. Searle); "A comprehensive volume that appeals to those interested in the geology of the Middle East in industry and academia" (Australian Mineral Foundation); "An essential reference book" (A.M. Ziegler).

As a much respected Carbonates Specialist who served on Advisory Council and country representative for International Association of Sedimentology, Abdulrahman conceived, proposed, organized, and co-lead along with Robert Scott of University of Tulsa, the 1997 International Conference on Jurassic/Cretaceous Carbonate Platform-Basins Systems. This conference was jointly sponsored by the United Arab Emirates University and SEPM (Society for Sedimentary Geology) in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates. The conference was attended by 125 geoscientists from four continents. The conference proceedings were published by SEPM as Special Publication No. 69 in 2000.

Abdulrahman's involvement with AAPG began in 1981. As a University Professor, he helped to bring many new students and young professionals to the organization. He became a member of the Advisory Council from 2007-2009 and member of House of Delegates; 2009-2010, culminating in President of AAPG Middle East Region from 2011-2013. In these roles, he has enthusiastically and respectfully represented and promoted the Association and the profession in general, wisely making use of opportunities to do so. He has served on many organizing committees of Middle East Conferences including GEO-94, GEO-2014, ADIPEC Abu Dhabi, SPE-MEOS, IPTC, etc.

Abdulrahman retired recently from academia and there is no doubt that he has distinguished himself as a much respected consultant on petroleum geology and petroleum systems of the Middle East for various organizations (regional and international). During his tenure, he held a number of business leadership positions on committees within UAE dealing with social and environmental issues, such as chairman of Ras Alkhaimah Cement Co., Chairman of International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, Board of Trustees at American University of Ras Alkhaimah and Ajman University for Science and Technology and General Secretary for Emirates Appreciation Prize for The Environment. Abdulrahman received the highest award in Environment studies from the President of the United Arab Emirates, and also personality award from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Saudi Arabia.

Robert Scott, Research Associate at University of Tulsa, had this to say: "Dr. Alsharhan and I have remained in contact as his geoscience career has evolved. He has been a leader not only in the Gulf Region but among his colleagues in North America. He attends the annual meetings of AAPG and presents important scientific results. He regularly promotes the hydrocarbon potential of Arabian basins. For example, his 2005 AAPG presentations on the Mesopotamian Basin in Iraq and the Paleozoic system in the northern Arabian Platform were technically excellent and generated great interest in new exploration concepts".

Christopher Kendall, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at University of South Carolina, made the following comments: “Dr. Abdulrahman Alsharhan’s professional interest in problem solving and the skilled way he practices his discipline as a sedimentary stratigrapher stand out. He is immersed in the application sedimentary stratigraphy to reservoir characterization and exploration. His clear articulation of the interface between the complexity of geological earth systems and hydrocarbon production are his métier. It endears him to his colleagues and those who are less familiar with these problems. He applies his skills to find innovative solutions in cooperation with other domain experts. His contributions to the hydrocarbon industry on practical methods and application of sedimentary modeling speak to his ability to identify and work with world experts with expertise other than his own. Being familiar myself with Middle Eastern Sedimentary stratigraphy, Dr. Alsharhan and his impressive and distinctive empirical approach to sedimentology embody his spirit. It exemplifies his ability to simply and intuitively present a complex package of intricate and complicated geologic models. Dr. Alsharhan uses language professional geoscientists understand, combining his own expertise with that of others who provide the depth and breadth required to supplement his own. He is a distinguished petroleum geoscientist for his prolific publications on Middle East geology and contributions and service to AAPG. In fact today, he stands out as the most published geoscientist in the region. He possesses the ideal personality of a true scientist characterized by his humble attitude and passion for the science”.

Abdulrahman Alsharhan has put into practice, the goals and ethics of AAPG. The promotion to Honorary Membership not only will present the Association with an excellent role model for younger geologists, but will also honor the man himself and his contributions to the science of petroleum geology. Dr. Alsharhan is not only the ideal earth scientist, but is a generous human being who is focused on passing on his skills and knowledge to those around him.

Citation prepared by:
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RESPONSE TO AAPG regarding Honorary Award

I am profoundly honored to be named an Honorary Member of AAPG and this is something I will always cherish. In looking over the roster of individuals who have previously received this award, I am proud to be included among them. I accepted with gratitude and express my sincere thanks to the Awards Committee, to the association and to the members of AAPG. I particularly want to thank my longtime friend Said Alhajri (Saudi Aramco) who as my biographer was overly generous in his comments.

I was born on September 15, 1954, in United Arab Emirates. I grew up eager to learn more of the earth, especially about nature, mountains and deserts which brought me close to its wonders. I believe that all people know what the earth contains, but few are curious enough to develop a deeper understanding or observe how the earth has evolved.

I received my first degree in Geology in 1978 from Cairo University and started my career as geologist with Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources in Abu Dhabi. In 1980 I award scholarship from United Arab Emirates University then I moved to USA for graduate studies at University of South Carolina (1981-1985), and gained both a masters and PhD degrees. From 1986-2011 I worked at the United Arab Emirates University as a Professor, Director of the Desert and Marine Research Centre and Dean of the Faculty of Science.

Outside the University I have held many positions including: Chairman of the Ras Al Khaimah Cement Company, the General Secretary of the Emirates Appreciation Prize for the Environment, and Chairman of the International Centre for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), Dubai.

My research interests have concentrated on the petroleum geology of the Middle East; water resources and the integrated management, and climatic changes and desertification of the Gulf Region. I have published over 100 scientific papers in refereed international journals and 8 books on earth science subjects and over 120 abstracts which was presented at international conferences and meetings. I was the first UAE national promoted to professor, based on my academic teaching and administration, research and participation, organizing or chairing sessions in regional and international meetings. I also have served as a reviewer for international scientific journals including the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, and have been a member of advisory board for the Journal of African earth Sciences, the International Association of Sedimentology, the Arabian Journal of Geosciences, and Middle East Petroleum Geosciences (GeoArabia).

I joined AAPG in 1981 when I was a graduate student at the University of South Carolina, and published my first paper in the Bulletin (as single author). Over these years I found that AAPG provided me with a great means to interact with and reduce the gap between industry and university. I have learned many skills and gained in experience through AAPG publications, conferences, continuing education opportunities, field trips, and networking during meetings. AAPG has given me the opportunity to develop and meet a large number of friends around the world, while maintaining contact with them and with my future professional activities. I have enjoyed all these professional interactions with all the geoscientists in the region. I have had in

my long administrative and academic career had the opportunity to serve as President of Middle East Region for the AAPG (2011-2013). This caps my 35-year career with experience in oil industry and academia.

The success that I have achieved over the years has been due to being fortunate enough to have rubbed shoulders with some of the great academicians and researchers and to have been able to study under them namely late Alan Nairn and Christopher Kendall (University of South Carolina). I came under the influence of them and they played the major role in the molding of my geologic career and, like so many others; I had tremendous admiration for their ability and guidance.

I have been encouraged and helped toward a successful career by people and institutions and I have dedicated an important part of my career to assisting my students, colleagues, scientific organization and professional societies. Therefore education, research and administration have been the main theme of my career, whether in academia or professional activities.

The opportunity to attend conferences and give lectures in many parts of the world has taught me about the universal nature of earth science and the inherent good qualities of people who practice this profession and share common bonds of friendship and of scientific cooperation.

Geology is a continuing wonder to me and I am as fascinated by it today walking on the coastal areas of Abu Dhabi and studying recent carbonates and evaporites with Chris Kendall and applying this understanding to the subsurface reservoirs of the Middle East, as I did years ago, becoming university professor. This has allowed me to expand my interests not only in petroleum geology but also in hydrogeology and the environment not that this has made me proficient but that it has captured my imagination.

Throughout the years I have had the opportunity to get to know, to work with and to learn from literally many of bright and considerate people from different cultures and societies, and I am the product of that process and reflect on my career which has been wonderful and exciting. The friendships evolving throughout these years have greatly enriched our lives.

My recent years have been devoted to writing books related to Middle East oil, but also they have been spent primarily in governmental, industry, environmental and regulatory affairs.

My sincere thanks are owed to the many geologists who have worked with me at the university or allowed me to collaborate with them internationally. For years because of the nature of my job and positions that have involved many absences from home, and I thank my dear and good wife, Mona, who shared with me the best of our life in USA in the early 80's, when I was doing my MSc and PhD degrees and she was still working towards her first degree at University of South Carolina. She supported my career in every possible way, and her tolerance of my activities is a debt which I can never repay.

Abdulrahman S. Alsharhan