

ANTHROPOLOGIST THAYER SCUDDER '48 RECEIVES THE PHILLIPS AWARD

DAN COURTER

Dr. Thayer Scudder '48, "a voice of optimism, reason and compassion at the often troubled intersection of economy and human ecology," was the recipient of the 2005 John Phillips Award, which was presented to him at an assembly on October 11.

The John Phillips Award, first given in 1965, recognizes Exonians whose contributions to the welfare of community, country and humanity exemplify in high degree the nobility of character and usefulness that John Phillips sought to promote in establishing the Academy.

In presenting the award, Jean Young du Pont '78, president of the General Alumni/ae Association, noted that at one point in his life, Scudder imagined he would become a mountaineer in the Arctic, an interest that began at Exeter, where he was the first president of the Academy's Mountaineering Club. Instead, Scudder, who earned both his B.A. and his Ph.D. at Harvard, became an applied anthropologist and "spent more than half a century in the valleys and deserts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East studying socioeconomic issues surrounding large-scale water resource development projects," Young du Pont told the assembly audience. His "research and influence," she added, "have resulted in millions of people achieving a better standard of living."

That research began in 1956 when Scudder began a four-year field study of the Gwembe Tonga people of Northern Rhodesia, who were being displaced by the construction of a dam on the Zambezi River. His research is now recognized as "arguably one of the top anthropological studies in the world, and it laid the groundwork for more successful resettlement projects in the future."

In the early 1960s, Scudder joined the faculty of the California Institute of Technology. Over the course of his career there (and as a consultant for the World Bank), explained Young du Pont, his "focus



Anthropologist Thayer Scudder '48 (center) has spent his career working to improve resettlement planning for people displaced by large-scale dam projects around the world. Presenting him with the award are Trustee Jenny Young du Pont '78, president of the General Alumni/ae Association (left), and Acting Principal Tom Hassan (right).

shifted from science to policy and the alleviation of poverty." Scudder came to believe that large dams can, if well managed, have a positive impact on resettled communities, and he has used his "expertise and his reputation as a scientist to influence resettlement policies on at least half of the large dams built in the last 20 years."

While heartened by the progress he has witnessed, Scudder cautioned that "if the United States and other nations in the world can effectively address still more difficult global issues such as global warming, increasing degradation of our natural resource base, increasing fundamentalism and a widening gap in income and understanding between rich and poor." Gazing out at his student audience, he added, "I will not be around to observe the outcome. You may well be."

TRUSTEE ROUNDUP

The trustees of the Academy held their annual fall meeting October 27-29, 2005, and welcomed two new members: G. Thompson "Tom" Hutton '73 and Eunice "Nicie" Johnson Panetta '84.

At that meeting, the Alumni/ae Affairs and Development Committee announced that The Exeter Initiatives campaign had reached \$197 million of its \$305 million goal. The trustees were delighted with the progress of the campaign as well as the large turnout of Academy community members at launch events this past year. They did note that half of the \$197 million has been received in cash, with the balance to be paid over the next five years. The trustees also noted that support of the Initiatives is not spread out evenly over the life of the campaign. Thus, some areas of the campaign will be funded before others, based on donor preference.

The trustees had dinner Thursday night with most of the 16 faculty members who traveled to China last summer, and members of the Education and Appointments Committee had breakfast with seven members of the Student Council.

A good portion of Friday's meeting was devoted to a discussion of various construction projects. They heard a detailed report from Roger Wakeman, director of facilities management, and from consultants on the Children's Center project. Construction of the new center was suspended late last summer when relatively low levels of coal ash were found on site. Coal ash is a byproduct of coal burning and is often found in the soil of older New England towns like Exeter. Since then, the Academy has been in close contact with the trustees, consultants and the state Department of Environmental Services, all of whom have been studying this situation with great care.

More soil samples were taken and studied during the fall. Given the small amounts of coal ash that were found well beneath the ground surface, the Academy was reassured that by using the common practice of capping the site and adding clean topsoil, the safety of the site could be assured. The trustees agreed unanimously to continue construction on the present site, and the center is slated to open this fall.

Trustees heard from Jay Martin, chief information officer, about plans for the Academy's new website, which will be rolled out this academic year, beginning with a new homepage and admissions section. Finally, the trustees devoted their Saturday morning to a Harkness discussion of affordability and how best to address rising tuition costs and financial aid resources. Saturday's discussion was one in an ongoing series of conversations about these important issues.