

## 2018 SWST FELLOW AWARD

*Thomas Gorman*

Professor Emeritus  
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It is truly an honor to receive recognition as a Fellow of the Society of Wood Science and Technology (SWST). Any successes I have had throughout my professional career are primarily due to the inspiration, encouragement, and support that I received from my affiliation with SWST members.

When I enrolled as a freshman at the University of Massachusetts, I was not familiar with wood science as a discipline and had decided to major in forestry. However, one of the requirements of the SAF-accredited forestry program was to take Dr. Bruce Hoadley's *Wood Anatomy* course. As a hobby woodworker, I was fascinated to learn about the structure of wood, and Dr. Hoadley's passion for wood science was contagious. This led me to enroll in his *Wood Properties* class as an elective, which was also when he was writing his book *Understanding Wood*, and his lectures in that class were undoubtedly the most fascinating and enjoyable in my academic career. Later, he mentored me in an undergraduate research project, and that inspired me to add wood science as a second major.

We had an SWST Student Chapter at UMass, and back then arranged to have Bill Feist, from the USDA Forest Products Laboratory, come to give a lecture on exterior finishes as part of the Visiting Scientist program. Little did I know at the time that several years later I would be working under Bill's mentorship as an Extension Intern at FPL in Madison, WI.

I would not be standing here today if it were not for the encouragement and guidance of so many former teachers and colleagues. I have already mentioned the roles that Dr. Hoadley and Bill Feist played in my training, but also would like to

recognize a few others: Russ Moody (USDA FPL), who saw potential for me to become a research engineer in his unit; Don Percival (Purdue), whose presentations on wood design at professional meetings captured my attention and who generously provided many of the slides that served as some of my first teaching materials; Tom Maloney, who offered his lab at nearby Washington State University to help me begin a research program when I began at the University of Idaho; Dave Green, Dave Kretschmann, James Evans, and Doug Rammer at the USDA FPL, who became collaborative research team members and close friends throughout my career. These are certainly not the only individuals who have influenced me in positive ways, but serve as examples of those who chose to reach out and enhance my professional skill set.

I hope that the graduate students that are participating in this meeting enjoy and benefit from associating with and learning from mentors like I have had. As faculty and senior scientists, we owe you the chance to learn and grow from others and I wish you success. This is a great time to be focusing on wood, given the increasing awareness by society of its environmental benefits. When forests are sustainably managed, wood contributes to carbon sequestration, low material energy input, and the economic and environmental benefits of local manufacturing of a renewable material. This is something that we, as wood scientists, have always known, but it is now increasingly understood by architects, engineers, designers, and builders. In my view, wood has entered a renaissance period, due to the public's growing awareness that a building material that is produced by the sun's energy is ideal for the future of our planet.