

UCAR Trustee-At-Large Candidate Robert E. Palmer

The members of the Nominating Committee are pleased to present Dr. Robert Palmer as an at-large candidate for the UCAR Board of Trustees. He is a well-recognized expert on science policy and the United States Congress, where he had a leadership role in passing the U.S. Global Change Research Act. He joined the House of Representatives' Science Committee in 1979 as a AAAS Congressional Science Fellow and worked his way up to Staff Director, an influential position he held for 12 years until his retirement in January 2005. In this capacity, he was intimately involved in policy matters related to space, energy, environment, and the physical sciences. Given the essentially bipartisan nature of the Science Committee, Dr. Palmer worked not only with the House Democratic Leadership, but also with the Committee's Republican leadership, and with scientific leaders over five Administrations, to promote sensible policies for science and technology. A key part of the Staff Director's job involved interacting with universities, high-tech groups, scientific associations, and other key constituencies to identify policy issues and policy responses and to promote enhanced public understanding of S&T policy issues. Dr. Palmer will bring to the Board unique expertise and insight on federal policy matters and the workings of Washington, particularly the programs at NASA, NOAA and NSF.



PERSONAL STATEMENT

I have spent most of my professional life with the Science Committee in the House of Representatives. I had the pleasure of working with the last three Congressmen from Boulder – Tim Wirth, David Skaggs, and the current incumbent, Mark Udall – all of whom both served on the House Science Committee and had a strong interest in promoting the scientific and policy capabilities resident at NCAR. Partly because of these Members, I've visited NCAR many times over the past two decades, including annually during a series of conferences and meetings in the early days of the Global Change Program. I clearly recall having a discussion around a small table at NCAR in the mid-1980's about what to call this new science. Should it be the International Geosphere-Biosphere Program, or the Global Habitability Program, or something else? After an hour or two, we all agreed to spread the word that it should be called "Global Change" – it helped that we had leaders like Jack Eddy and Francis Bretherton around the table – and darn if the name didn't stick.

I would hope that my Congressional experience would provide a useful complement to UCAR's excellent governmental affairs team in matters related to Federal budgets, the linkage of science with policy, and the selling of the Federal S&T portfolio. My retirement from the Hill was

recent enough that I still retain reasonably good working relationships with many of the staff, and some of the Members, that deal with Federal S&T issues of interest to UCAR's members, and I would hope that these contacts might be useful in some of the Board's deliberations.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Dr. Palmer was the longest serving Staff Director in the history of the Committee on Science, U.S. House of Representatives. He was Majority Chief of Staff during the 103rd Congress (1993-1994). After Republicans took control of the Congress in 1995, he served as Minority Chief of Staff for ten additional years, until his retirement from Congress in January 2005.

The Science Committee's jurisdiction encompasses all federally funded civilian R&D programs, including space, energy, environment, and the physical sciences. As Staff Director, Palmer was responsible for:

- Formulating and helping to implement the agenda of the Committee's Democratic Caucus, which ranged in size from 22 to 40 Members of Congress;
- Working with the House Democratic Leadership, with the Committee's Republican leadership, and with scientific leaders in the Administration to promote sensible policies for science and technology;
- Interacting with universities, high-tech groups, scientific associations, and other key constituencies to identify policy issues and policy responses and to promote enhanced public understanding of S&T policy issues;
- Representing the Committee dozens of times annually at fora of all sorts. A recent example is "The Impact of the 2004 Elections on Science and Technology" (web-cast at http://www.aaas.org/news/press_room/election/12012004.shtml), a AAAS-sponsored forum held in December, 2004;
- Leading a staff – ranging from 20 to 55 individuals – comprised largely of attorneys and Ph.D.'s in scientific and technical fields.

During his service on the Science Committee, he organized or supervised literally hundreds of Congressional hearings, and drafted or supervised the drafting of scores of bills, including agency authorization bills, which became public law. In addition, for many years, he was the Committee's lead staff member involved in analyzing Federal R&D budgets and in interacting with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

Dr. Palmer came to the Science Committee in 1979 as a AAAS Congressional Science Fellow. Between 1979-1993, he worked in a variety of capacities on the Committee, including Staff Director of the Subcommittee on International Scientific Cooperation (where he represented the Committee at many international meetings) and Staff Director of the Subcommittee on

Investigations and Oversight (where he documented management and policy blunders in a number of Federal programs).

Since his retirement earlier this year, Dr. Palmer has continued to consult and lecture on science and technology policy. He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and has served on a number of boards.

Dr. Palmer holds a B.A. from Harvard University in Social Relations, an M.S. from Northeastern University in Biology, and a Ph.D. from the University of Delaware in Marine Biology. Prior to his service on Capitol Hill, he worked for a year as a VISTA volunteer in the inner city and on an Indian reservation, for two years as a private detective, and for several years as a researcher in marine biology. His wife, Mary Christman, is a professor of statistics at the University of Florida.