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## **Woods Hole Diversity Initiative Presents the 2016 John K. Bullard Diversity Award to Geologist Ben Gutierrez**

U.S. Geological Survey scientist Benjamin T. Gutierrez was presented the 2016 John K. Bullard Diversity Award, given every other year to an individual in the Woods Hole community who plays a significant role in making the community more inclusive and more welcoming of people of all backgrounds. The award was presented at a ceremony in Woods Hole June 17.

The diversity award is named in honor for John Bullard, former president of the Sea Education Association, who also received the first award in 2012 for his leadership, vision, and commitment to diversity in the Woods Hole science community and for his role in forming the Woods Hole Diversity Initiative and serving on the Woods Hole Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC). The 2014 award was presented to long-time employee Lionel Hall of the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL), who was present at the June 17 ceremony.

John Bullard, now regional administrator for the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office of NOAA Fisheries in Gloucester, Mass., could not be present at the award ceremony, but shared some thoughts. "Ben is a dedicated long-term member of the Woods Hole Diversity Advisory Committee. Some of us have been around long enough to remember the Committee's 2005 Diversity Roadmap, which envisioned a student-centered internship program supported by a rigorous academic college course and mentored student investigations," Bullard said. "The Roadmap was the cerebral inception of the Woods Hole Partnership in Education Program. From the beginning, Ben has been a critical player in ensuring that our early vision became a solid reality."

The John K. Bullard Diversity Award was presented to Gutierrez by Walter Barnhardt, chief scientist of the USGS Woods Hole Coastal and Marine Science Center and a member of the Woods Hole Diversity Initiative, during Juneteenth celebration events at the MBL. A lecture on Ernest Everett Just, a pioneering African American marine biologist who spent summers at the MBL in Woods Hole for many years in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was given by Biochemist W. Malcolm Byrnes of Howard University in Washington, DC following the Bullard Diversity Award presentation.

Gutierrez is a geologist at the USGS's Woods Hole Coastal and Marine Science Center. He came to Woods Hole in 1995 after receiving his B.S. degree in environmental geology from the College of William and Mary. He started as a graduate research assistant in the Department of Geology and Geophysics at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), working with Dr. David Aubrey. Gutierrez then entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Joint Program in Oceanography, receiving a M.S. degree in oceanography in 1999. He soon began his affiliation with USGS, serving as a research intern, before enrolling at the University of South Carolina, where he was awarded a Ph.D. in 2006 under the guidance of Dr. George Voulgaris for

research on nearshore circulation sediment transport patterns offshore of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

“While building a successful career as a scientist, Ben Gutierrez has taken a leadership role in education and outreach activities, with special emphasis on promoting diversity and inclusion in science,” noted a nomination letter. “He has been interested in and committed to education, outreach and inclusion since the beginning of his science career. In 2003, while still a Ph.D. candidate, he served with the FastForward Science Quest Program, led by Dr. Claudia Benitez-Nelson, to guide middle school students with semester-long science projects.”

He served as the science curriculum coordinator from 2012 to 2015 for the Native Youth Science Preserving our Homeland Program, working with the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe and other groups to design and implement a summer science experience for tribe members in fifth-eighth grade on Cape Cod. Gutierrez is also a longtime and active member of the Society for the Advancement of Chicano and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS).

Gutierrez is one of the founders of PEP, having served since the first PEP summer in 2009 as an instructor, the curriculum coordinator and most recently as course director of the PEP course in global climate change. In addition to leading the formal education component of PEP, Gutierrez has served as a mentor to PEP students and has been one of PEP’s most effective recruiters, identifying and bringing into the PEP network talent students from a diversity of backgrounds. Ben has played a significant role in virtually every area of PEP, including student selection, mentor matching, and program development.”

“As all DAC members know, Ben’s service is always the most positive spirit. He is steady, calm, and always supportive of others. He listens, considers viewpoints and ideas different from his own, and then adds well reasoned, creative ideas and solutions,” noted a nomination letter. “As a young professional who is also a dedicated husband and father, Ben has done an exemplary job of meeting the demands of his research career while also making significant contributions to the effort to make Woods Hole more welcoming and inclusive.

Barnhardt accepted the Institution plaque from MBL Director Huntington Willard, and presented two plaques to Gutierrez. Gutierrez’s name, institution and year of award will be added to the Institution plaque, which will hang at the USGS until the next award presentation in 2018. Each recipient gets a personal plaque to keep.

In his brief remarks, Willard said “when diversity is abundant, that’s when you really see the place come alive. This award recognizes the significance to growth and benefits of diversity in the Woods Hole science community. ”

As he accepted the Institution award for USGS, Barnhardt said of Gutierrez, “He’s doing everything to push the next generation forward in the sciences.”

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Related links:

The John K. Bullard Diversity Award: <http://www.woodsholediversity.org/event1213.htm>

2014 John K. Bullard Diversity Award Recipient:

[http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/press\\_release/pr2014/news/nr1407/](http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/press_release/pr2014/news/nr1407/)

Woods Hole Diversity Initiative: <http://www.woodsholediversity.org/Memorandum.html>

Woods Hole Diversity Advisory Committee: <http://www.woodsholediversity.org/>