



Words of Acceptance of the Ramon Margalef Prize in Ecology and Environmental Sciences. Harold A. Mooney

It is an enormous honor and joy to receive the prestigious Ramon Margalef Prize in Ecology and Environmental Sciences. This is a special award since it is uniquely targeted for achievement in ecology and environmental sciences and as a previous recipient noted it is equivalent to an Oscar for life-time achievement in this field. I had the privilege of spending a few days with Professor Margalef and I was incredibly impressed with his deep understanding of the complexities of the natural world and his desire to communicate his knowledge to the general public, and as he said, to school children. He has been aptly described as a "humble genius".

The career of Ramon Margalef was truly remarkable in its breadth, depth and impact. He was a talented research scientist, synthesizer, teacher, administrator, and popularizer of science. Few can match the impact of such a wonderful career but many can be inspired by it, as have been I. My own career has also been diverse, starting with the study of the physiological mechanisms that adapt plants to environments extending from the arctic to the tropics, to the evolution of such adaptive traits. Then I have spent considerable time, working with others around the world, examining the nature and the consequences of the biotic homogenization of the earth that is occurring due to globalization, which in many instances is severely impacting desired outputs from ecosystems. As the tempo of global changes has increased I have been working, again with many colleagues locally and within the international community, on understanding the ecosystem impacts of the other global changes, including climate change. Most recently I have turned my attention, together with a large team of international scientists, on synthesizing what we know about the consequences of the increasing loss of biodiversity on the capacity of the world's ecosystems to deliver services to society

and what we can do to have more favorable outcomes than current trends of development lead us to expect. My work and that of all ecologists today continues to seek understanding of the complexities of the biotic world but with an increasing awareness that the results of these studies are of crucial importance to society as a whole, as Ramon Margalef certainly taught his students as well as the entire ecological science community.

I would like to thank the Catalan Government for honoring Ramon Margalef and in this way recognizing the contributions of the science of ecology to understanding and sustaining the ecosystems that are crucial to human well-being. I also would like to thank my peers on the selection committee for choosing me for this singular honor and recognizing a lifetime spent doing what has been very exciting and enormously challenging and rewarding.