

REAL-WORLD METEOROLOGY

A series of profiles celebrating a half-century of Certified Consulting Meteorologists



Who: William H. "Bill" Haggard

What: Forensic Meteorologist

When: CCM since 1974

Where: Asheville, North Carolina

Why: Realized the potential value of certification in consulting as a forensic meteorologist

How: Bill Haggard became a CCM a year before he retired from federal service as director of the National Climatic Center (now the National Climatic Data Center) in Asheville, North Carolina. Since entering private practice, Haggard has special-

ized in forensic meteorology, conducting detailed investigations and testifying as an expert witness for legal cases in which weather was a factor. He has been involved in hundreds of cases, including personal injury; maritime, aviation, and highway accidents, and even murder cases.

Haggard cites as his "greatest personal thrill" working with famed tornado researcher T. Theodore "Ted" Fujita, who "came down from the academic Ivory Tower to collaborate on real-world field investigations and consult with me on several microburst, tornado, hurricane, and derecho extreme wind-related matters."

In His Own Words: "The highlights of my 32 years since becoming a CCM have been associated with the research of the weather factors in cases and the opportunity to assist the court in its search for the truth, as well as the association with the attorneys and experts involved. The meteorological detective work (weather autopsy) is the first challenge. The second is how to show-and-tell the essence of the weather's role to the judge and jury in an effective manner.

"For example, in the case of a huge Texas oil tank ruptured in Hurricane Alicia, using the brilliant insight of Ted Fujita, we graphed the sequence of oil spills on the downwind sides of the tank, then showed the time-lapse sequence of the GVS radar with cell movements changing with the wind over time at the radar reflection location of the tank, and proved the wind of 83 knots at first stains were well below the tank's intended design to withstand 125-mph winds.

"Employing the adage 'two minds are better than one,' over a 23-year period, Climatological Consulting Corporation utilized the talents of 18 CCMs, either as employees or associates with very diverse specialties to do the weather pathology and create the show-and-tell exhibits and testimony for courtroom use to assist the court.

"Being a CCM—and encouraging others to become one—has been rewarding and beneficial in providing associates and clients a meaningful indication of professional peer approval of qualifications, character, and experience."

