

REAL-WORLD METEOROLOGY

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



Who: Peter Robinson

What: Professor of geography

When: CCM since 1983

Where: University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill (UNC)

Why: To gain real-world experience in applied climatology

How: As a member of UNC's Geography Department, Peter has taught various courses related to the atmospheric sciences, but one consistent one, which he regards as his specialty, is "applied climatology." This interest led him to be appointed North Carolina's state climatologist in 1976, and he became involved with the AMS through local chapter activities and the founding of the STAC Committee

on Applied Climatology. In 1980, he was seconded to the National Climate Program Office (NCPO) within NOAA for two years, with responsibility for the data and information aspects of the program, and to foster cooperative federal-state climate relationships.

While with NCPO, Peter was encouraged by friends and colleagues to consider candidacy for CCM. The idea appealed to him, since much of his academic research and teaching was directed toward practical ends, and his position with the government also emphasized the application aspect of the science.

In His Own Words: "As a consultant, I've been involved in a small but steady stream of activities. With a full-time academic job, I have had the luxury of accepting only those jobs that have been in some way especially intriguing. For example, what appeared to be a routine analysis of the number of wet work days for a behind-schedule construction company was intriguing because they were facing a penalty for not knowing, almost a year in advance, that an El Niño event was on the way and this would automatically bring more wet days—an interesting twist on a forecast problem.

"In most cases, I have negotiated with the client in advance so that I could either publish—as a research paper—or use—as a class example—the results of the investigation. Confidentiality and anonymity, of course, were guaranteed. But as a result, I have a series of case studies for my Applied Climatology course that are based on real-world experience. That is probably the greatest (nonfinancial!) benefit that certification has been to me. It is a qualification that I can take into the real (i.e., nonacademic) world and use, and which helps ensure that a major aspect of my teaching is rooted in practical reality. Seeing student responses to these real-world examples has been one of the most satisfying experiences of my career."

For more information on the Certified Consulting Meteorologist (CCM) Program, please visit the AMS Web site at www.ametsoc.org/amscert/index.html.

