

## REAL-WORLD METEOROLOGY

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



**Who:** Richard J. "Dick" Westergard

**What:** Private sector

**When:** CCM since 2006

**Where:** Niskayuna, New York

**Why:** After retiring from government service, Westergard realized the value of an independent evaluation of his professional meteorological knowledge and experience to give private sector clients the confidence to engage his services.



**How:** After retiring from the position of warning coordination meteorologist at the Albany office of the NWS, Westergard was awarded his CCM in March of 2006. Since then he has worked on more than 100 forensic cases and prepared boutique forecasts for a number of very specialized clients. Westergard says the cases that are most interesting are those that involve reconstructing severe weather events.

**In His Own Words:** "As a child in the woods of northern Michigan, I wanted to know how everything worked. By the time I was five, I had disassembled everything from old clocks to push lawnmowers to an old tricycle. At 13, I assembled my first bicycle from parts of discarded bicycles I had collected around the neighborhood. As a high school freshman I joined Junior Electronics Technicians, a club which collected old electronic parts and created new objects with them. In high school, my geography teacher told the class that statistically at least one person in the room would likely find weather-related work. It occurred to me then that weather was something more complex than anything I had ever taken apart, and I wanted to know how it worked. In 1966, when the air force offered me weather observer training, I eagerly signed up, and have been learning ever since. I still don't fully know how it works, but I have learned how to piece it together pretty well after the fact.

"As a CCM I have worked on a variety of severe-weather related forensic cases. Some examples include extreme rainfall resulting in flash flooding, tropical storm rainfall-induced sink holes, downburst wind damage, and severe weather damage to local power grids resulting in personal injury. The most rewarding part of this work is seeing the jigsaw puzzle of archived facts from surface and upper-air observations, radar, satellite, lightning-detection systems, and the forecast discussions of the meteorologists working the storm as it unfolds, falling into place to flesh out the story of the weather event."

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