

HGS Dinner Meeting, December 9

Sedimentary Geology in the 21st Century: Exciting Opportunities for Creative Geologists

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Current forces in the markets, together with historical trends, combine to offer exciting prospects for geoscientists in the next decades. This discussion, contrary to many others, is an optimistic scenario of what is in store for our industry.

Despite the aberration of the 1980s, the demand for geoscientists will continue to grow well into the next century. A gap is widening between increasing opportunities in the petroleum industry and in the number of students being trained at the universities. Students entering the geosciences since the 1980s have turned towards environmental disciplines. However, opportunities in the environmental industry have peaked. Meanwhile, there are few people left in soft rock sedimentology, stratigraphy, and paleontology. The heyday of these disciplines was in the 1950s and 1960s. As the experts from those days retire or change profession by force or choice, the shortfall grows between the need for and the supply of people who can apply stratigraphic principles and concepts. For those dedicated sedimentologists, stratigraphers, and paleontologists who have stayed on, the message is "not to look back at what has happened, but to look at ways to widen your expertise". This is an opportunity for you and those disciplines to change and evolve to fill the existing and future needs of our industry. The most flexible ones, those with integration capabilities, will succeed.

Biographical Sketch



John M. Armentrout received his undergraduate education and a Master of Science in Geology from the University of Oregon in

1967. During 1967 to 1970, he worked as

Director of Outdoor Education at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry in Portland, Oregon, where he was responsible for field research programs and educational field trips. In 1970 he returned to school at the University of Washington, receiving his Doctorate in Geology in 1973.

John's career in industry began in 1973 when he joined Mobil Oil Corporation's Alaskan Exploration Group. Subsequent Mobil assignments included production geology, global basin analysis, deep water clastics, and new exploration ventures. His current assignment in integrated stratigraphic interpretation at Mobil's Dallas Technical Center began in 1990.

John's research interests are broad. Recent

publications include papers on the Neogene sequence stratigraphy and petroleum geochemistry of the Gulf of Mexico and sequence stratigraphy of active margin basins in Oregon, Washington, India, and China.

Dr. Armentrout was a 1978-1979 National Research Postdoctoral Fellow at the U.S. Geological Survey, an AAPG Distinguished Lecturer in 1992-1993, and the University of Texas at Austin Oualline Lecturer in 1993. He also teaches the SEPM short course, "Integrated Stratigraphic Analysis", which has been presented at several national meetings and universities. He was president of SEPM in 1993-1994 and is currently president of GCSSEPM. ■