

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE

NEWS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20230

NATIONAL
OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC
ADMINISTRATION

NOAA04-R299-35

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 25, 2004

Contact: Greg Romano
Chris Vaccaro National Weather Service
(301) 713-0622

NOAA HERALDS HALF-CENTURY OF FORECASTING ACHIEVEMENTS BY DR. GLAHN

Director of NOAA's Meteorological Development Laboratory Dr. Harry R. "Bob" Glahn celebrates his 50-year anniversary of government service today. Glahn's contributions to meteorology include revolutionary new approaches that have led to improved forecasts that have contributed to saving innumerable lives and protecting economic interests while at NOAA's National Weather Service. NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

"Bob's 50 years of contributions to NOAA's National Weather Service cannot be summarized in just a few words," said Brig. Gen. David L. Johnson, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), director of NOAA's National Weather Service. "Many of the tools he developed are still being used today and have led to exponential improvements in forecasting. The fact that he is still around, still thinking of new and better ways to improve forecasting, is testament to his dedication to the National Weather Service and to America."

Recognized throughout the world for his ground-breaking work in the use of applied statistics in automated weather forecasts, Glahn is a key figure in the history of modern meteorology and operational weather forecasting. In the 1970s he conceived and led the development and implementation of the Model Output Statistics (MOS) method of producing weather forecasts. MOS uses advanced statistical techniques to improve the accuracy of forecasts generated by computer models. It is a critical element in producing high-quality weather forecasts out to seven days universally used in forecasting.

"Dr. Glahn is a world class scientist whose contributions to statistical meteorology have been recognized by his many peers around the world. His contributions have been significant covering Model Output Statistics to his current involvement in the National Digital Forecast Database," said Jack Hayes, director of National Weather Service Office of Science and Technology. "I am extremely honored to have a scientist of his caliber as a key member on the Office of Science and Technology team."

Glahn also played a critical role during the sweeping modernization program conducted by the National Weather Service in the 1990s. He identified a new path to harness information technology that would move the products and services of the National Weather Service into the digital age. Forecasters were freed from the traditional burden of hand typing hundreds of text forecasts by using high-tech tools. In doing this, a high-resolution forecast database was developed leading to a myriad of new digital products, which could be automatically produced.

Glahn's creative vision led to the Interactive Forecast Preparation System (IFPS). He led a NOAA-wide team of researchers and developers to chart a roadmap for the ambitious system, which is on track for completion within the next year at 122 National Weather Service weather forecast offices and nine national centers. This will allow the transition from manpower-intensive text products to low-cost, information-rich digital and graphical weather forecast products — a leap forward into the Internet age of information exchange benefiting the U.S. public and economy.

Glahn created and led a national team to develop a National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD) where the gridded forecasts produced at the individual WFOs would be forged into a single national gridded forecast database. Initial operational capability for some elements of the NDFD will begin in December.

From the start of his career, Glahn envisioned a process where National Weather Service forecasts would become more accurate, timely, detailed and automated. He has promoted probability forecasts and decision theory concepts that can now be fully exploited with the NDFD by private enterprises. Evolution of IFPS and NDFD will bring increased efficiency to National Weather Service operations and more accurate information. Glahn is also a world expert in meteorological data formats and compression technology. He has worked with the World Meteorological Organization to develop gridded formats that have allowed the National Weather Service and weather services around the world to significantly reduce the cost of data transmission across wideband data networks.

NOAA's National Weather Service is the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings for the United States and its territories. NOAA's National Weather Service operates the most advanced weather and flood warning and forecast system in the world, helping to protect lives and property and enhance the national economy.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

###

On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA's National Weather Service: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>