Dr. John Utgaard, (UND class of 1958), and Professor Emeritus of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale’s Department of Geology, is this year’s recipient of the Arthur Gray Leonard Award.

- The Leonard Banquet is Friday, October 2, 2009 in the Ramada Inn, Grand Forks. Social begins at 5:30 p.m., with supper at 6 p.m. and a program to follow.
- Ticket information is available from the Department at (701) 777-2811.

John Utgaard was born and raised in small towns in North Dakota and graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1958 with a B.S. Degree in Geology. His time at UND included a diverse undergraduate education and many awards and activities, including the W.A. Tarr Award from Sigma Gamma Epsilon, and membership in Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, Lambda Chi Alpha, and Men’s Glee Club (Varsity Bards).

During John’s senior year at UND, Wilson M. Laird, longtime UND Geology Professor and State Geologist wrote, “He is probably one of the best rounded students that we have ever graduated from the University of North Dakota. There is no question in my mind but that he will do an outstanding job . . . in the field of geology.” Dr. Laird’s words proved correct, as Dr. Utgaard has made significant contributions to research, teaching and service that continue to today.

Following his undergraduate studies at UND, he worked with Jim Parks as a Geological Assistant in the Carbonate Research Group at Shell Development
Company. He attended Indiana University (Bloomington) from 1958 to 1963 and received an M. A. in 1961 and a Ph.D. Degree in Geology in 1963, working with T. G. Perry on Mississippian fenestrates and Ordovician trepostome bryozoans.

He was a post-doctoral Research Associate at the U.S. National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution from 1963 to 1965, working with R. S. Boardman on Paleozoic bryozoans.

"Professor Utgaard's work with Bryozoa has made a considerable contribution to the Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology," said Dr. H. D., "Bud" Holland, Professor Emeritus of Geology at UND.

He joined the faculty of the Department of Geology at Southern Illinois University in 1965, and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1968 and to Professor of Geology in 1973. He served as Chair of the Department of Geology from 1984 to 1993. He has been active in a number of professional and scientific organizations and taught a variety of courses in sedimentology and paleontology.

He was actively involved in organizing and teaching Southern Illinois University's six-week long summer Field Geology course in Montana and Wyoming. He also taught at the Indiana University Geologic Field Station in Cardwell Montana. His 33 M.S. students and one Ph.D. graduate conducted research mainly in paleontology, paleoecology, environments of deposition and carbonate petrology. After retiring in 1998, he saw two Master's students finish their degrees. He also continues to do research and occasionally teaches - lately an Honors Course on Dinosaurs and Their World - and does other educational outreach activities.

Dr. Laird also noted, about John Utgaard in his undergraduate years, "He has an excellent grasp of his field of interest but is not narrow as he has interests in other disciplines and knowledge in the field of music and art." This Renaissance attitude continues to this day. Recent stays in Red Lodge, Montana have been at a condo on the golf course rather than in a cabin at the YBRA's Beartooth Research Camp. Off-duty pursuits include hiking, classical music, painting, fishing, golfing, bird and wild flower watching, and playing with family photographs using Photoshop.

+ The Leonard Medal was established in 1992, in honor of Arthur Gray Leonard (1865-1932), scholar, leader, and pioneering geologist of North Dakota. Award of the medal recognizes outstanding achievement in the geosciences in research, technical studies and projects applied to societal needs, teaching, educational development, or leadership in conservation of earth's resources and environment. +