WILLIAM T. PECORA AWARD

Dr. Eric Vermote

For outstanding contributions to Earth science and leadership in atmospheric correction methods that have ensured scientific quality and shaped the science of remote sensing.

Dr. Eric Vermote has dedicated his career to improving the quality and consistency of global remote sensing through developing and applying robust atmospheric corrections over land. The advances he pioneered have played a critical role in furthering the use of Earth observation to support critical applications such as food security. Starting in the 1990s, his work established foundational scientific methods and robust algorithms to account for the radiative contributions of atmospheric constituents, including aerosols, water vapor, and ozone, which enabled highly accurate atmospheric corrections of satellite retrievals from missions including the Advanced Very High-Resolution Radiometer, SPOT Vegetation, Terra and Aqua Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectrometer, Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite, and Landsat.

Dr. Vermote's atmospheric correction models underpin foundational products from flagship Earth observation missions. His foresight in the development of long-term surface reflectance archives has enabled time series analyses that serve communities in a multitude of critical remote sensing applications, from the monitoring of crops to the development of environmental diagnostic and predictive indicators. His 6-S Radiative Transfer Code is the foundation for the atmospheric correction of terrestrial satellite retrievals and is broadly utilized for operational data production across multiple decades of satellite observations. Dr. Vermote's scientific and technical contributions as a member of science teams have led to significant improvement of Earth observation methods, such as his development of the Land Surface Reflectance code, which provides the basis for Landsat Collection 2 Surface Reflectance Analysis Ready Data, and other critical downstream global Landsat products. Dr. Vermote's leadership in international collaborations has helped advance global standards for atmospheric correction and for the validation of satellite retrievals via surface reflectance measurements, via the Aeronet Sunphotometer network, which are critical to ensure the consistency and reliability of data across missions. Furthermore, he is a dedicated mentor to numerous students, continuing to inspire new generations of scientists.

In recognition of his outstanding career-long contributions to atmospheric correction that has assured the quality and usefulness of vast collections of global land satellite observations, the Department of the Interior and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration take great pleasure in presenting the 2026 William T. Pecora Individual Award to Dr. Eric Vermote.

Secretary
Department of the Interior

Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration