

ESA President 2003–2004

William H. Schlesinger

William H. Schlesinger is James B. Duke Professor of Biogeochemistry and Dean of the Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences at Duke University.

Completing his A.B. at Dartmouth (1972), and Ph.D at Cornell (1976), he joined the faculty at Duke in 1980. He is the author or coauthor of over 160 scientific papers (including 21 papers in *Ecology*, *Ecological Monographs*, and *Ecological Applications*). His textbook, *Biogeochemistry: An Analysis of Global Change* (Academic Press, second edition 1997), is widely adopted. He was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1995 and a member of the National Academy of Sciences in 2003.

Schlesinger grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, where his interests in the environment were first kindled by a weekend program for high school students at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. His first scientific publication described the composition of a forest outside Cleveland, and early work carried him to the White Mountains of New Hampshire and Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia.

Currently, Schlesinger focuses his research on the role of soils in the global carbon cycle. He is the co-principal investigator for the Free Air Carbon Dioxide Enrichment (FACE) Experiment in the Duke Forest—a project that aims to understand how an entire forest ecosystem (vegetation and soils) will respond to growth in elevated CO₂. He has also worked extensively in desert ecosystems and their response to global change—changes that often lead to the degradation of soils and regional desertification. His research has been featured on NOVA, CNN, NPR, and on the pages of *Discover*, *National Geographic*, *The New York Times*, and *Scientific American*.

Schlesinger has served the Society in several important capacities in the past. He is a past member and chair of the Publications Committee; past Vice President for Finance and Investments (1996–2002), past member of editorial boards for *Ecology*/*Ecological Monographs* and *Ecological Applications*, and ESA Publications Editor-in-Chief in 1987–1988. Schlesinger has testified before U.S. House



and Senate Committees on a variety of environmental issues, including preservation of desert habitats and global climate change.

As a faculty member at Duke, Schlesinger and his wife, Lisa Dellwo, live in Durham, North Carolina. Aside from their interest in environment, they enjoy collecting Southwestern and Native American art, gourmet cooking, cold martinis, travel, and keeping up with friends and family from around the world.