

# THE 2025 DAVID MOREHOUSE AWARD PRESENTED TO DR. JOHN F. ABEL



It is with great pleasure that we present the 2025 David Morehouse Award to Dr. John F. Abel in recognition of his extraordinary service to the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network (CLWN) and his leadership in promoting sustainable, climate-resilient living for Cayuga Lake shoreline and watershed residents.

John served on the CLWN Board for 12 years, including a long tenure as Treasurer, where he transformed our financial management system and ushered the organization into a new era of fiscal stability. His dedication to sound governance and transparency has ensured that CLWN is well-positioned to thrive and respond effectively to the challenges facing Cayuga Lake and its watershed.

John took a leadership role during the challenging days of the COVID pandemic, ensuring that we received emergency federal funding. He was also a cornerstone of guidance for the critically important processes of updating our Strategic Plan and Bylaws.

In addition to his service with CLWN, John has been a leader in the West Shore Neighborhood Association. In these roles he spearheaded the creation of Lakeside Living in a Changing Climate—a pioneering handbook that equips lakeside and watershed homeowners with the tools they need not only for everyday living, but also for making home and landscaping choices that safeguard Cayuga Lake while preparing for the realities of climate change. This guide has become a valuable resource for community members who want to be active stewards of the lake.

Through his leadership with CLWN and the Community Science Institute, John also served many years as a dedicated HABS Harrier volunteer and founding “Quadrant Leader” for the southwest shore for Cayuga Lake’s Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring Program. John was also a big supporter of hydrilla research and prevention. He participated regularly in Ithaca Hydrilla Task Force meetings, checked for it along the southwest lake shoreline and in the water from his kayak, and kept the West Shore Neighborhood Association apprised of the situation.

John’s vision and leadership reflect a deep understanding of the Cayuga Lake watershed—its ecology, its communities, and the economic realities that shape local action. As CLWN’s former Executive Director Dr. Hilary Lambert recalls, working alongside John meant striving to meet his high standards for professionalizing, streamlining, and strengthening the Network so that it could fulfill its role as a regional leader in watershed protection. John’s intelligent, thorough, and forward-thinking approach has left a lasting imprint on our organization.

Through his commitment to organizational stewardship, community leadership, and climate resilience, John has strengthened CLWN, elevated public awareness, and provided a lasting positive impact on our watershed.

# THE DAVID MOREHOUSE AWARD

ESTABLISHED SPRING 2003



**David Morehouse** (1937–2002), exemplified dedication, leadership, and action. Throughout his life, he worked as an individual and with groups, usually in leadership positions, to protect this lake that he loved.

A pioneer and visionary, Dave became actively involved in protecting the Finger Lakes long before doing so was popular. His passing in the summer of 2002 was a great loss. Throughout his life, he worked to protect Cayuga Lake including serving as a founding member of the two organizations that sponsor this award, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization.

David was born into his boat-building family, who knew Cayuga Lake the way most of us know our front yards and grew up on the northwest shore. David graduated from Mynderse Academy in Seneca Falls and earned his BS from Cornell in freshwater biology. After serving in the United States Army for two years in Korea, he spent an additional two years away completing an MBA degree from the University of Arizona. Before leaving for Arizona, he had formed the Cayuga Lake Preservation Association (1963), and returned to nurture that organization while managing Hibiscus Harbor at Union Springs. That was the first of the lake protection organizations that were the result of his dedicated passion for keeping Cayuga clean, and it was the seed for the growth of the organizations that continue his work today.

Together, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization created the Dave Morehouse Award in 2003 to honor his contributions and to recognize others who are making a difference to protect our magnificent water resources. Many individuals, businesses, teachers, agricultural producers, and community groups are doing wonderful things to preserve and protect our environment.

### **The criteria for the award are:**

- Leadership in an endeavor that has lasting benefit.
- A minimum of five years of actively working to restore and protect the water resources of the Cayuga Lake Watershed.
- A nominee may be an individual, group, or business and it is not necessary for the nominee to live in the watershed.
- The award is announced each year in August.

**Past Recipients:** Tee-Ann Hunter • Liz Thorndike • David Bouldin • Bill Ebert • John Mawdsley • Bill Foster • Steve Penningroth • Doris Brown, Dooley Kiefer & Citizen's Committee to Save Cayuga Lake • Jim White • Finger Lakes Land Trust • Noel Desch • Judy Pipher • Roxanna Johnston • Patterson Farms • Sylvia Hurlbut