



## Background Notes on the Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal (HM)

**Mountain Legacy Mission Statement:** *to promote collaborative development based on the Hillary Model of friendship and appreciation for mountain environments and their peoples*

Mountain Legacy grew out of the *Namche Conference: People, Park and Mountain Ecotourism*, held in Namche Bazar in May 2003. The conference was organized by Empar Alos Alabajos and Seth Sicroff of Bridges: Projects in Rational Tourism Development (Bridges-PRTD) and Prof. Teiji Watanabe of Hokkaido University (Japan), in collaboration with the *Himalayan Journal of Sciences* (HJS) and the Himalayan Association for the Advancement of Science (HimAAS).

The Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal is awarded for remarkable service in the conservation of culture and nature in mountainous regions. The medal both recognizes Sir Edmund Hillary's own service on behalf of mountain people and their environment and also encourages the continuing emulation of his example. The Hillary Medal was personally authorized by Sir Edmund, and it was formally initiated by unanimous declaration of the Namche Conference.

Selection of Hillary Medalists and presentations have been presided over by Dr. Beau Beza, professor at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University (Australia). Both **RMIT** and Sue Badyari, CEO of **World Expeditions**, a leader in "responsible tourism," have provided generous financial support from the inception of the Hillary Medal. We are grateful to **ICIMOD**, **Highland Excursions**, and the **Radisson Hotel** for hosting the March 2014 event. Dr. Jack D. Ives, author of the seminal *Himalayan Dilemma*, and more recently *Himalayan Perceptions*, and *Sustainable Mountain Development* has provided indispensable guidance and assistance. Peter Hillary has represented the Hillary family legacy, and has presided over all key decisions and HM presentations.

### List of Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal Recipients

**Michael Schmitz** and **Helen Cawley** for their work on keystone cultural and ecological projects in the Solu-Khumbu districts of Nepal, including the comprehensive seven-year restoration and enhancement of Tengboche Monastery.

**Dr. Alton C. Byers** *Director of Science and Exploration* at The Mountain Institute, for his outstanding achievements in applied conservation research in the Mt. Everest (Nepal), Makalu-Barun (Nepal), and Huascarán (Peru) national parks.

**Anthony "Papa Tony" Freake**, for his remarkable humanitarian and development work in Phortse, Nepal, over a period of twenty years.

**Scott MacLennan**, founder and Executive Director of The Mountain Fund, whose projects in Nepal include a school for HIV-affected children, two clinics and a training hospital, the rehabilitation of two monasteries, a women's leadership training program the staffing of a public school. MacLennan has mentored new NGOs around the world.

**Ang Rita Sherpa**, Senior Program Manager at The Mountain Institute, for the development of numerous management programs in remote mountainous regions around the world.

**Dr. Harshwanti Bisht**, Principal, SD G.P.G. College, Dehradun (India). Since 1989, Dr. Bisht has labored to improve conditions in the Gangotri area of Uttarakhand, at the headwaters of the Ganges in northern India. Her Save Gangotri project has planted tens of thousands of saplings, organized eco-awareness campaigns, propagated endangered medicinal herbs, and introduced ecotourism standards to an area that had been ravaged by climate change and unregulated pilgrimage. Her monograph *Tourism in Garhwal Himalaya* is a blueprint for integrated mount mountain development, embracing a full panoply of opportunities, objectives, challenges, and action proposals.