



## Steve Stanley

I call myself a paleontologist because, ever since Jurassic Park, everyone knows who one is. In fact, when I tell people this is who I am, they usually respond with a “Wow!” (Jurassic Park made us paleontologists popular for doing nothing.)

Within the science community, I call myself a paleobiologist. In fact, I’m half geologist and half biologist. I do laboratory and field and theoretical research.

I grew up on 24 acres along a small river in Gates Mills, a beautiful, woodsy Cleveland suburb, where I became interested in nature. I received my A.B. from Princeton (summa cum laude) and my doctorate from Yale. I had been happily on the faculty of Johns Hopkins for 36 years when the University of Hawaii made me an offer I couldn’t refuse. After 14 years there, I returned to

Baltimore, where I have many friends. On some days I commute to the Smithsonian, where as a research associate I have an office/lab. I now also have a part-time position at Florida State U., where I’m only required to be a few weeks every year. I have a small vacation house on the Potomac in Shepherdstown, WV. I study the history of life, often in the context of past environmental change. I’ve done research in many different areas and written several books. My most important biological contribution has been my book *Macroevolution: Pattern and Process*, which still receives about 30 literature citations per year, more than 40 years after its publication. It argues for the punctuational model of evolution and explores its consequences. My most important geological contribution has entailed showing how changes in ocean chemistry during Earth’s history have governed what kinds of organisms have built reefs and contributed sediment that’s become limestone; among other things, I grew a particular kind of planktonic algae in lab experiments showing how these flourished in seawater of Cretaceous chemistry to the degree that their tiny shield-like elements of calcite formed the widespread chalk (including the White Cliffs of Dover) that gave the Cretaceous Period its name (“creta” being the Latin word for chalk).

I’ve served as president of the Paleontological Society and the American Geosciences Institute and have been elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

My most important awards have been the Penrose Medal, the highest award of the

Geological Society of America, and the International Association of Top Professionals choice as the top research professor of the decade (2010-2019), which I probably didn't deserve but didn't turn down.

It's been great to have been paid for my hobby for many years, and I'm not done yet!