



APPALACHIAN SEARCH AND RESCUE CONFERENCE

To: ASRC Secretary
From: Don Scelza
Re: Nomination of Keith Conover for Fellow of the ASRC
Date: January 9, 2018

I am nominating Keith Conover for Fellow of the ASRC.

With Keith, I thought that single statement would be sufficient. However, after reading the details in the Administration Manual, I find that slightly more documentation is required. There are five requirements that a nominee for Fellow of the ASRC must meet:

- 1) *The individual must have been a member of the ASRC for at least 10 years:* I believe I am correct in saying that no one has been a member of the ASRC for longer than Keith. In 1974 Keith, along with three others, founded the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference.
- 2) *The individual must have been certified at a level of ASRC Field Team Leader or above:* Keith has held a Search Manager 1 certification, the highest level of certification in the ASRC.
- 3) *The individual must have exhibited extensive active involvement in lost person search and rescue beyond that of their home search and rescue organization:* I do have to admit, this is one of the harder items to document, only because it is hard to pick a search and rescue organization that could be strictly considered outside of Keith's home organization. While living in Virginia, Keith was involved in the founding of the Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue group and the Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group, the two original ASRC groups. He was also involved in the founding of the Virginia Search and Rescue Council. After moving to Pennsylvania, Keith founded the Allegheny Mountain Rescue Group and the Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Council.
- 4) *The individual must have extensive involvement in teaching the art of search and rescue:* At a high level, anyone who has ever met Keith knows that it is impossible to have a conversation with him about search and rescue and not have him teach you something. He is an educator at heart. More specifically, Keith has been involved in teaching all aspects of search and rescue. For many in the ASRC, Keith provided their first formal education in search and rescue. Keith is comfortable teaching everyone from newbies to become call out qualified to educating search managers in the finer aspects of

leadership. His desire is that his students pass the level of skill application and move well into analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

- 5) *The individual must have advanced the art of search and rescue in one or more of a) search or rescue technology, b) search management, c) search or rescue theory, d) search or rescue practice or e) wilderness medicine:* I could easily provide examples of how Keith has advanced the art in any of these areas, however if you spend more than five minutes talking with him, you will realize that he is passionate about the practice of wilderness medicine. Keith recognized that patients in the wilderness were getting a far lower level of care than those in non-wilderness settings. Even more, he realized that when wilderness patients did receive emergency medical care, it was, while appropriate for the street, suboptimal or even harmful in the wilderness environment. In Pittsburgh Keith founded, in association with the Center for Emergency Medicine, the Wilderness Emergency Medical Services Institute, WEMSI, with the purpose of advancing the art of wilderness emergency medicine. The curriculum he created was one of, if not the, first of its kind. More importantly for this discussion is that the curriculum was oriented to search and rescue providers. Central to the WEMSI curriculum was the concept of on-line medical command, the ability of a provider to consult with a physician who had a deep understanding of the complexity of providing care in a wilderness environment.

I have had to be careful while attempting to show just cause for bestowing this honor on Keith to keep from writing a small novel. It is hard to fully describe the effect he has had on search and rescue. During my 30 year involvement with the ASRC, I have had the honor and privilege to participate in many searches where ASRC has been instrumental in returning lost persons to their loved ones. I am sure that some of those incidents would have turned out differently if it were not for Keith's involvement in making the ASRC what it is. I, along with many others, would not be in the positions we are without Keith. He was and will always be my teacher, my mentor and my friend.

That others may live.

Sincerely,



Donald A. Scelza