

Alan F. Weekes Ph.D. NBCT
Brief Professional Biography

I am a native of Upstate New York, from the Village of Hilton. I grew up on the shore of Lake Ontario. And I really mean it. The front of our house was not 25 feet from the lake. Close enough that some years we had over 6 inches of ice freezing on it from the waves splashing on our breakwall before the lake froze out. Activities then included sailing, fishing and swimming. In the winter we explored the lake ice, played hockey and when ice-skating. We could skate for miles between the swamp and creeks. We also enjoyed skiing, but while we had snow we had to drive to the hills to ski. I was interested in rocks and nature from an early age. I remember looking closely at rocks in our driveway trying to find fossils. When I had the opportunity in the eighth grade to join an Explorer Post that specialized in cave exploring I did. We went caving in the Schoharie area of New York not far from Albany. It was about a 4 hour drive. As part of doing that I also learned rock climbing and rappelling. It was great fun and adventurous all the way through undergraduate school. I graduated from Hilton High School in 1973. I then went to the State University of New York at Brockport which was about a 20 minute drive from our house. I majored in Geology there. As a student I was active in the Geology and Earth Science Club and was President of it during my junior year. The club provided a great opportunity to go on more field trips to sightsee and collect rocks and minerals. I use many of them still in class today.

I graduated from Brockport in 1977 with a B.A. degree mainly because of my enjoyment of learning languages. I took both Spanish and Russian. I then went to graduate school at the State University of New York at Fredonia. Fredonia is southwest of Buffalo NY near Lake Erie. It receives a lot of snow, over 200 inches a year. I truthfully tell people that I would cross country ski to school on the sidewalks. My master's thesis was on the "Lithology and Paleoenvironmental Interpretation of a Core from Sandusky, Ohio". I had over 600 feet of rock core to cut in half and investigate. It was a very interesting project. At the end of my time there I was told of a job opening in New Jersey.

My first geology job was with Jenny Geotechnical Corp out of South Orange, NJ. The project was in northwestern NJ doing an investigation for a tunnel to connect to a proposed reservoir. I worked for Jenny from June to October then their portion of the project was finished. I was picked up immediately by the main project contractor, Woodward-Clyde Consultants as a Staff Geologist. As a geologist for "Woody" I worked on projects in New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Tennessee. While working on a project in Tennessee I met my wife, Trish. We

were married March 1981. During a deep recession in 1982 I was laid off along with over half of our professional staff. After a brief stint working for my father-in-law I decided to go into teaching. We were living in Nashville, TN at the time so I went to Peabody College of Vanderbilt University to get the courses to get my teaching credentials. It happened that the School District of Pickens County, SC was recruiting at Peabody at about the time I was finishing my studies. As a result I came to Pickens Junior High during a job interviewing tour of South Carolina and Florida. I was offered the position of an eighth grade earth science teacher to begin the fall of 1984. It was also during my time at Vanderbilt that my daughter Celina was born. My son, Thomas was born in 1986.

After six years of being at Pickens I decided to pursue my final degree, the doctorate. I earned the Doctor of Philosophy in Geology from the University of South Carolina at Columbia. I completed it by going to school during two summers and one spring semester on campus. I received my degree in 1993. The doctorate has given me the opportunity to work at USC and Clemson University at times. Later, I decided to attempt to earn National Board Certification. I completed the requirements for it and was awarded in 2000. The NBCT was renewed in 2009. Throughout my career I have tried to be professionally active by being a member of several professional organizations and participating in various development opportunities. I have presented at many South Carolina Science Council conferences and also at National Science Teacher Association conferences. I am now a Past President of both the South Carolina Science Council and the South Carolina Earth Science Teachers Association.

One of the highlights of my career was being invited by a professor at Clemson to participate in a constructivist workshop program in Thailand. I had the opportunity to spend a month doing workshops for middle school students, teachers, graduate students and undergraduate students. While there I presented many of the labs that we do with our classes. We also had the chance to tour much of the country. This is now my 26th year at Pickens Middle. I have seen many changes over time. I was here for the building of the “new wing” in 1987 and the change over to a middle school from a junior high. I have seen both BSAP and PACT, now PASS and been through several textbook adoptions. I have been involved in creating most of the labs that we do in 8th grade. Many of the students that I have now are children of past students of mine. I like to think that I still have fun on most days. Part of the reason why is that I don’t take myself so seriously that I can’t play around. I still will jump up on a desktop if I need to make a point.

I hope that my students come out of my class with a better understanding of science and the earth. I try to get across the idea of scale, change and scientific thought. If students can get a little of that, I will have succeeded.