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EDITOR'S PREFACE

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It is with great sadness that I edited (with Charles Henderson) and write a preface to this volume dedicated to the memory and works of five great North American conodont workers—North American in the sense of origin and residence, but not in the scope of work and importance. Several of these papers were first presented in Geological Society of America Pander Society sessions dedicated to Anita Harris—October 2015—and Bruce Wardlaw—September 2016. The dedication grew with the desire to include Carl Rexroad, Walt Sweet, and Glen Merrill as the volume was compiled. I knew all five reasonably well; all hosted me at their homes, offices, labs, or we interacted in the field or at meetings on numerous occasions. I learned essential things from each that have made me a better person, scientist, and teacher.

Carl Rexroad was the first conodont worker, outside of my degree program contacts, to be nice to me. After giving my first Pander Society meeting talk as a graduate student in Knoxville he approached me and offered congratulations. A kind gesture from someone who I had referenced extensively in my masters thesis and typical of Carl as a gentleman and scholar. Walt Sweet was also at the Knoxville meeting. I introduced myself and in the course of our conversation he said: “travel as much as you can, especially now before you get too much responsibility.” I took this advice to heart and apparently never gained responsibility as he recognized it. Anita Harris is my hero – she worked harder than anyone, was generous with her time, famously spoke her mind, and was crazy smart as well as fun. My cohorts, best stated by Mark Kleffner, knew to never look at Anita when giving a talk, as she would invariably be sadly shaking her head at the errors of our identifications and interpretations. Bruce Wardlaw and Glen Merrill were like storms—beautiful and terrifying to behold, especially when in the same room. They taught me that it is fine to disagree—just be able to support your position and proposals—and to be collegial and social as well. Both were outstanding scientists and extremely passionate. So basically: do good science, work hard, be nice (but do not tolerate fools), travel, it is alright to disagree and say what is on your mind, just do it passionately. We miss you all greatly.

D. Jeffrey Over
Geneseo, NY, October 2017