Citation:

The Katherine Palmer Award is presented annually by the Paleontological Research Institution to a non-professional in recognition of excellence in paleontology. We present the award at the MAPS Expo each year in recognition of the contribution that this organization makes to the productive interaction between amateurs and professionals in the field we all love. Now more than ever, professionals and non-professionals must make efforts to keep the lines of communication open. We all have much to gain from the wisdom and experience of each other.

Steve Felton was born and grew up on the coast of Maine, where he spent many a summer day on the rocky shores and tidal flats fascinated by the marine organisms he saw. After graduating from high school and a stint in the U.S. Army, he settled in Cincinnati where he still lives.

As he examined the magnificent Ordovician fossils of the Cincinnati region, it quickly became apparent to Steve that Cincinnati was the shore of an ancient sea, reminiscent of his childhood. The local library provided him with his first reference book, and he purchased as many of the listed references as he could. Dwayne Stone of Marietta College and Richard Davis of the University of Cincinnati provided additional guidance and references and Steve's interest grew. He became an active member of Cincinnati's Dry Dredgers -- one of the nation's most active amateur paleontological organizations. He soon amassed a large collection of Cincinnati fossils, and has donated many of them to school children, nature centers, as well as many professionals in the U.S. and abroad. He has made special efforts to provide specimens and information to graduate students and professionals for use in their research. Steve's specialty is gastropods of the genus Cyclonema, and he has paid special attention to seeking out all of its many species and varieties. He has authored or coauthored several technical publications on the group, including a major paper with Robert Morris of Wittenberg University in Ohio on the symbiotic association of crinoids, platyceratid gastropods, and the worm-like organism Cornulites from Cincinnati. Among the many amateur fossil collectors of the Cincinnati area, Steve stands out. He is described by Dave Meyer of the University of Cincinnati as "undoubtedly the most knowledgeable local amateur as to the local biostratigraphy" and as "a real scholar" for his diligence in researching the old literature.

For the excellence he brings to his pursuit of paleontology, the Paleontological Research Institution is proud to present its 1996 Katherine Palmer Award to Stephen H. Felton.