

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI



John (Jack) E. Hales, Jr. joined the Weather Bureau in 1967 as a weather observer at the Seattle-Tacoma airport after earning his B.S. (1965) and M.S. (1967) degrees in Meteorology from the University of Utah. Mr. Hales progressed from a weather observer to lead forecaster in a short five-year period. Upon the NWS reorganization in 1972, Hales became a Lead Forecaster at the Weather Service Forecast Office, Phoenix. In 1975 he became a Severe Local Storms (SELS) Lead Forecaster at the National Severe Storms Forecast Center (NSSFC) in Kansas City. More than thirty-six years later, Mr. Hales continues to serve as a Lead Forecaster at the Storm Prediction Center (SPC; formerly NSSFC) in Norman, OK.

Over his long career, Mr. Hales has distinguished himself with innovative ideas and leadership, excellent forecasts for the protection of life and property, and contributions to the science of severe storms. Mr. Hales has issued over 5,500 Severe Thunderstorm and Tornado Watches across the continental United States during his exemplary career, including many that helped save lives prior to and during numerous tornado and severe thunderstorm outbreaks.

Key Watches include his outstanding forecasts for the 1984 Carolinas tornado outbreak; the "Superstorm" across Florida in 1993; the Palm Sunday II outbreak in 1994; the Enterprise, Alabama EF4 tornado in 2007; the Super Tuesday tornado outbreak of 2008; and, the Parkersburg, Iowa EF5 tornado in 2008. His thirty-six plus years as a National Severe Storms Lead Forecaster is twelve years longer than any Lead Forecaster in the history of SELS/SPC, and he has issued twice as many Severe Thunderstorm/Tornado Watches compared to any prior SELS/SPC Lead Forecaster. In addition to his outstanding public forecast service, Mr. Hales has authored or co-authored numerous publications on the science of severe convective storms and tornadoes, including more useful methods of forecast verification. In the early 1970's, he performed ground-breaking research on the southwest United States Monsoon and associated Gulf of California moisture surge. Additional research in the 1980's by Mr. Hales considerably improved the understanding of Los Angeles Basin tornado patterns. Furthermore, he spearheaded efforts for SELS to issue new forecast products in the mid/late 1980's, including implementation of a Day 2 Convective Outlook and Mesoscale Discussions.