

## Awards and Citations

### Presentation of the 2016 Paleontological Society Pojeta Award to Judy Scotchmoor

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It is a great pleasure to award Judy Scotchmoor, former Assistant Director for Outreach and Education at the University of California's Museum of Paleontology (UCMP), the Paleontological Society's Pojeta Award. Judy is perhaps best known as a science educator and many of her most significant accomplishments have been in that context. However, Judy's association and involvement in paleontology has included much more than this.

Judy was a renowned middle school science teacher at Marin Country Day School when she first came into contact with paleontology. Her love of science was enormous and she dedicated herself to sharing that love and excitement with her students. This also meant experiencing science herself, not just teaching it, and this led her to seek out opportunities to participate first hand. Paleontology had been of interest since her undergraduate days and she sought out opportunities to participate, including a Museum of the Rockies course in Bozeman, Montana followed by volunteer work as a field assistant in the Precambrian of the White Sea in Russia, and in the Cretaceous of the North Slope of Alaska. Those experiences, followed by a weekend teachers' workshop, convinced her that paleontology was both her first love as well as an exciting source of topics for her teaching. Her passion and commitment to paleontology was so strong that she spent her next sabbatical year volunteering in UCMP's preparation lab where she learned fossil preparation and worked in the field at the late Miocene Blackhawk Quarry on the southwest slope of Mt. Diablo, CA, and in the Upper Cretaceous dinosaur-bearing formations of eastern Montana.

Judy's year at UCMP co-occurred at the same time UCMP had begun discussions on how to formalize the museum's outreach and development programs, but they were unsure whether to go with a professional development person or an outreach/education specialist. Ultimately, a job description was produced and Judy applied, and while not a perfect match for either area, Judy's enthusiasm, dedication, and 25 years of experience in the classroom won the day, and she left Marin Country Day School to take the outreach reins at UCMP.

Judy took on a large challenge when she took the position at UCMP. She went from a totally secure and familiar position as a middle school teacher to a position that at the time was unfunded and little defined. In addition, Judy had to deal with administrators and colleagues who questioned whether she, a

middle school teacher, could survive in the demanding university environment. However, Judy did more than survive—she excelled and brought both support and honors to UCMP in the process. UCMP's major transformation in outreach and education was the result of successful partnerships and the creative networks she nurtured both on and off campus. Judy sought out faculty and curator input and assembled around her an outstanding team of writers, web designers, and artists who have built some of the most valued science education resources on the web. In all of these undertakings, Judy's passion and energy was inspiring. She has the ability to draw out the best in those around her, and was never afraid of the scope of work undertaken, or pushing the envelope to get things done.

Judy is perhaps best known for her central role in developing *Understanding Evolution*, one of the premier science web sites in the world. Designed initially to provide tools for K-12 teachers presenting evolutionary concepts, the site has grown into what is generally recognized as the most comprehensive site available on the web for obtaining information on evolution and has over a million page accesses a month. The site has also been translated into Hebrew, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, and Tibetan.

While developing *Understanding Evolution*, a recurrent question that surfaced was why so many people did not understand and/or accept evolution. Judy recognized that at least part of the problem was a fundamental lack of understanding of what was and was not science and how the process of science functioned. She took the lead in proposing to the National Science Foundation that this problem could be addressed by a second website, modeled on *Understanding Evolution*, which provided K-16 materials for teaching science, and the *Understanding Science* website was born. Through workshops made up of science teachers and professional scientists from a diversity of disciplines, *Understanding Science* took a new look at how science works and how best to present this process to students while capturing the excitement of science. These sites would not have been possible without Judy's vision, administrative skills, and talents as a science educator. In 2010 these two sites were honored as joint recipients of *Science* magazine's prize for Online Resources in Education (SPORE).

However, Judy's contributions to paleontology went far beyond her duties of running UCMP's outreach program and overseeing the creation of award-winning museum web sites.

She also played a key role in the development of *Paleontological Portal*—a web site that provides access to and that links the paleontological community. In addition, she co-edited *Learning from the Fossil Record* (PS Special Publication, vol. 2), *Evolution: Investigating the Evidence*, (PS Special Publication, vol. 9), *Dinosaurs: the science behind the stories* (AGI), *1906 San Francisco Earthquake Centennial Field Guides* (GSA Field Guide 7), as well as having distinguished service on the Education Committee of the Paleontological Society. Judy has undertaken these and many, many other duties with professionalism, energy and an incredible amount of “people-skill”. If there is any hallmark of her service to the paleontological community, it is her boundless energy that engages people and encourages the best from them.

On the national stage Judy is in great demand to serve on a host of short courses, panels, and oversight committees from the local university and community levels to national venues. She was also sought out as a skilled writer, reviewer, and editor. Because of her role in developing teaching resource, as well as her numerous other contributions to education, Judy was awarded the prestigious 2013 Stephen Jay Gould Prize from the Society for the Study of Evolution, the Science Education Award from The American Institute of

Biological Sciences, and was selected as an American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow as well as a Fellow of the California Academy of Sciences.

Over the years, Judy has intrepidly led the way in developing a wealth of creative and innovative ways to support the work of classroom teachers, from organizing and promoting invaluable on-line resources, many with a paleontological perspective, to leading a host of engaging professional development workshops and seminars. Because she possesses a deep understanding of the nature of science, and because she is experienced with the day-to-day demands placed upon teachers and the challenges posed by the education system they work in, Judy has helped to develop ideas and resources that are genuinely useful and effective in meeting the needs of students. However, Judy does something far greater than just create amazing, exemplary paleo and science resources—she touches people in a way that strengthens, empowers, and encourages them to be their very best. She has promoted paleontology in everything she has done and has used it well to inspire scientific literacy around the world.

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