



NEWSLETTER

Mission Statement: The Association for Women in Science, Inc. (AWIS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the achievement of equity and full participation of women in all areas of science and technology.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear AWIS Member,

For many of us this is the busiest time of the year with fall already here and the holiday season right around the corner. And this is also the time during which we reflect back on the year past.

For our organization this includes honoring our most active members with the annual AWIS-SD recognition awards. This year's awards were given in the categories below and the recipients were recognized at our annual Open House on October 26.

Please join me in congratulating the following AWIS-SD members:

- Rookie of the Year was awarded to Milka Kostic
- Outreach Activities was awarded to Susy McKay & Alicia Bicknell
- Outstanding Volunteer was awarded to Julie Kinyoun and Cindy Atwell
- Leadership was awarded to Robin Rosenfeld
- Presidents Award was awarded to Barbara Armstrong

On behalf of the AWIS-SD board I would like to thank all recipients for their hard work. Their work and the contribution of all our volunteers make our AWIS-SD possible.

The holiday season is also the time during which we as an organization look forward to the next year. The Women in bioScience Conference (WiB) will be held at the Salk institute in May 2007. Committees have been formed and plans are underway to make the conference an even bigger success than years past. Attending a WiB Conference has form many members served as a motivator and resource to make a change in their lives and careers. If attending a past WiB conference has inspired you to change jobs, career direction and/or return to school, send your stories to the Newsletter committee at Newsletter@awissd.org.

As always if you have any comments or ideas please send me an email at president@awissd.org. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

With warmest regards,

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Upcoming Events

Compiled by Janice Payne

November 14: The Pros and Cons of Community College Teaching. Come and hear what it is all about; how to find positions and what it takes to get hired and succeed in the community college teaching field. Speakers: Buran Haidar, Crista Wagner, Laura Murphy and Sandra Slivka. Location: Miramar College, S5 (Science Building) Room 206 Time: 5:30pm-8pm. RSVP: <http://awis.npaci.edu/calendar/>

December 4: Strategy Session, Effective Communication. Location: Salk Institute. Time: 6-8pm. Members only event. RSVP: <http://awis.npaci.edu/calendar/>

December: Holiday social. Join fellow AWIS members as we celebrate the holiday season. Date and location: TBA.

Free Lecture Series at San Diego Natural History Museum

- **Grey Matters: From Molecules to Mind.** Join San Diego's leading neuroscientists as they explore the human brain. Registration 5:30pm, lecture 6pm
 - **November 1:** Conscious and Unconscious Memory Systems of the Mammalian Brain. Speaker: Larry Squire, UCSD School of Medicine
 - **January 16:** New Drug Treatments and the Future of Stem Cells for the Aging Brain. Speaker: Stuart Lipton, The Burnham Institute for Medical Research

- **Global Climate Change: Challenges and Solutions.**

Join us for a series of provocative and thoughtful discussions by leading experts on climate change. Time: 6:30-8pm

- **November 14: Global Climate Change, Sea Level and Western Megadrought.** Speaker: Dr. Johnathan Overpeck, University of Arizona
- **January 9: How We Know the Climate is Changing.** Speaker: Dr. Mark Thiemens, UCSD

AWIS-SD Members on the Move

A Top Woman in Cancer Research



Susan Forsburg, former AWIS-SD board member, and professor at USC, was named one of the Top 9 Women in cancer research by Pink Magazine and the American Cancer Society (ACS).

“My work is very basic; it's a good thing that ACS and the Leukemia society recognize that basic work makes important contributions to clinical progress.”

Kim Barrett Promoted to Dean at UCSD

By Amber Dance

Kim Barrett just moved into a spacious new office in the Office of Graduate Studies at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). Barrett, a member of the AWIS-San Diego Board from 1999-2003, is thrilled with her new position as dean of graduate studies. As she learns the ropes of her new job, she plans to enhance UCSD's reputation for graduate studies and the lives of those students who choose to attend.

Barrett, a native of London, has been interested in science for as long as she can remember. A self-described “obnoxiously nerdy” child, she methodically worked through each of the 100 experiments in her first chemistry book. Barrett, who was the first in her family to attend college, matriculated to University College London with every intention of becoming a synthetic chemist. However, she recalls her first experiment as a bad “omen.” At the final stage of the synthesis, she dropped her work and spilled the hard-won product all over the fume hood. This, and other factors, convinced Barrett that synthetic chemistry was not her path after all. She chose medicinal and biological chemistry for her further studies.

After earning her PhD, Barrett crossed the Atlantic for her “BTA.” This unofficial degree—“Been to America”—was practically a requirement for an academic career in the UK. She meant to return



home in a year or two, but again her intentions went awry. Barrett chose to remain in the States for reasons both personal and professional. Under Margaret Thatcher, public funding for science in the UK was not easily acquired. In addition, the UK was a difficult environment for a female scientist. Barrett recalls one professor's comment: “Over my dead body will we have women on this faculty.” (Barrett notes that the University College London faculty now contains many women - and that professor is dead).

Following her postdoctoral training at the National Institutes of Health, Barrett moved further west to UCSD for a research position in the medical school. And “20 years later” she says, “I'm still here.” Being a professor, says Barrett, is “the best job in the world.” She loves the research, the teaching, even writing the proposals—although she still frets about her grant reviews. Barrett delights in the academic environment at UCSD. She says, “I get to work with smart, interesting people all day.” She enjoys administrative work as well, and served on numerous committees before being hired as dean. Among those committees are the UCSD and Medical School Task Forces on Gender Equity.

Barrett is concerned about the impact that the current political climate will have on academic researchers. With funding hard to come by, she predicts, “We will lose a whole cadre of junior people.” However, she maintains that the availability of funds is cyclical, and promises, “Good times will come again.”

For those starting out in science, Barrett advises, “Stick with it. Tenacity is the most valuable thing you can have.” She recommends seeking out mentors, which has been an important factor in her career development. And, says Barrett, “Never hesitate to volunteer for things that are interesting to you.” These activities can lead to unexpected benefits, such as invitations to give presentations in interesting places.

When not working to make UCSD a better place, Barrett researches the cells that line the intestine. Members of her lab dissect how these cells regulate transport across the intestinal wall. Her interests led her to study first intestinal parasites such as *Salmonella*, then the beneficial, probiotic microorganisms that also interact with gut cells. Being a member of the medical school faculty constantly reminds Barrett of the clinical implications of her work. “Eventually—maybe not today, maybe not even ten years from now—what we're doing will contribute to research that will help people with diseases,” says Barrett.

Although her chemistry career faltered, Barrett still enjoys a different kind of chemical synthesis. After a long day at work, it's not unusual for Barrett to head straight for the kitchen. She calls cooking her “therapy.” Indian dishes are among her favorites, although she'll try anything.

This year Barrett has started a new hobby: running. “I got this crazy idea,” she says wonderingly, “that I'd do a half-marathon with my husband.” She finished the race, and followed it with another long run. After that she had a little trouble moving around, but her muscles have finally stopped aching.

Barrett will need all her energy now that she has to juggle her professorial work with her new duties as dean. Fortunately, she relishes the variety and looks forward to working with faculty from different departments to improve graduate studies. With her hectic schedule, Barrett is “not quite sure” how everything gets done. But, somehow, it does—with time left to prepare a tasty meal.

 NEWS

BIOCOM Workforce Development Center

Submitted by Grace Nakayama

The BIOCUM Workforce Development Center is an online resource highlighting careers, education, and training for the life sciences industry particularly related to San Diego. Featured are searchable databases containing over 800 career descriptions ranging from R&D to marketing, more than 200 education and training programs offered locally, as well as a directory of 250 member companies. A multimedia presentation entitled, "What is Biotechnology?" introduces medical, agricultural and environmental applications of the life sciences industry.

This wide-ranging website is organized into four main sections:

- Life Sciences Careers, which includes the BIOCUM member directory and a section about postdoctoral training;
- Education and Training, which provides links to educational institutions located in San Diego County, and the degree, certificate and continuing education programs related to careers in the life sciences;
- BIOCUM Initiatives, which describes initiatives created and supported by BIOCUM that positively influence the growth of the life sciences industry, such as the Life Sciences Summer Institute for students and high school teachers;
- Resources, which includes news articles, upcoming events, and Publications and Links. The Links section is a broad collection spanning BIOCUM literature, professional societies, governmental agencies, and general information about biotechnology, tools for educators, etc.

The BIOCUM Workforce Development Center is designed for a broad audience of high school students, educators, industry workforce, and those in career transition. Check out this extensive resource at www.biocomworkforce.org.

Porter Novelli Shows AWIS-SD How to Put Its Best Face Forward

By Janice Payne

First impressions are important. I often wonder what prospective members or sponsors think when I mention that I am a member of AWIS. The impression they have of AWIS will determine whether they choose to become members, agree to sponsor an event or to fund a scholarship.

To refine the public face of AWIS-SD, one of our generous sponsors, the public relations firm Porter Novelli Life Sciences, held a workshop in August for AWIS-SD Board and committee members. Our workshop panel included Trista Morrison, account supervisor, Amy Blackley, PhD, account executive and Jessica Yingling, PhD, account executive.

Morrison reviewed how an organization can build relationships with the public by communicating through the news. A good news

story must describe to the audience a unique side of AWIS, and what makes it different from other organizations. The media will also be more interested in a news story with an emotional element. "Your research involves saving lives, and that's a good thing," noted Morrison.

Yingling discussed developing key messages that can be presented on all collateral materials, such as brochures, web sites and press releases. "We've discovered that three times three equals one. If you have three key messages that are delivered in your materials three times, people will remember one message."

The final panelist, Blackley, discussed how to develop relationships with the media in order to pitch a story. She stressed the importance of keeping current with the news and gaining familiarity with local science writers and their writings. Blackley suggested developing contacts and building relationships with writers by dropping them a complementary line after a recent story. The writer will more than likely remember the contact for future reference.

Thanks to Morrison, Yingling and Blackley and Porter Novelli, AWIS-SD will do a better job at putting its best face forward. If you are interested in joining the Public Relations Committee, please contact the committee chair, Kathryn Nguyen PublicRelations@awissd.org.

Strategy Session Seeks Balance between Work and Family

By Valerie Uzzell

The October AWIS Strategy Session Committee took aim at one of the most difficult topics facing women in science, finding a balance between work and family. Family was defined broadly as those people to whom we all feel obligations: children, husbands, partners, parents and close friends. The session started with an exercise on tough choices involving work and family. Laura Fernau, Strategy Session member and session leader, provided an example: her decision about whether or not to choose her company's alternate schedule to work longer hours each day in order to spend every other Friday off with her young son. She described a rule of thumb called the "10-10-10 rule" that she has often used for such complex decisions. The rule calls for us to consider the consequences of each decision, for ourselves and our families, on three timescales: 10 minutes, 10 months, and 10 years. At each table, we all contemplated how we might apply the 10-10-10 rule to a difficult decision in our lives, and discussed our decisions in small groups.

After we grappled with complex decisions that face working women everyday, we discussed strategies for reducing conflicts between work and family. First, we considered the issue of expectations. What expectations do our families have of us, and are they reasonable? For example, if we find ourselves rushing home every night to make dinner for our family, is this really necessary? Do our spouses expect us to cook every night, or are they willing to cook some nights, or get takeout?

This discussion led us to another crucial strategy: outsourcing. If we, working women, find there are not enough hours in the day to do what is required, we should hire help. . We discussed what

barriers we each had to outsourcing some of the many tasks that make us crazy, like cooking, cleaning, mowing, and childcare. One of the crucial barriers was of course money—it's expensive to hire a gardener or housekeeper. But as several participants pointed out, our time is worth a great deal as well, and it may not make sense for our scientifically-trained brains to be occupied with lawn mowing every Sunday morning. Another barrier we discussed was "class guilt." Some of us felt funny hiring other people to do our dirty work. But other participants disagreed, stating that hiring another person to do an honorable job was good for the economy and good for the employee as well.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the evening was the use of case studies to test our new-found strategies. We split up into two groups, and each group was presented with a complex problem requiring them to balance work and family obligations. We brainstormed how to deal with conflicting obligations to the boss, the family, and the pocketbook. Each case study presented an unusual mix of difficult circumstances. Some of the issues discussed were weddings, funerals, lost jobs, international travel, and health insurance. Our job was to devise a strategy for the protagonist to maneuver through the stormy waters of their difficult conflicts and arrive safely on the other side, preferably while maintaining personal relationships and financial stability. I know that I came away from the exercise thinking that if I can solve problems as hard as this (with the help of half dozen or so fellow AWIS members) then I can surely face anything that life has to throw at me.

FEATURES / OPINIONS



Estelle Ramey, Ph.D.
(1917-2006)
A Remembrance
By Lynne Friedmann, AWIS
Fellow

Lynne Friedmann and Estelle Ramey, Ph.D. at the AWIS National 20th Anniversary Gala, Washington, D.C. (1991).

With the recent death of Estelle Ramey, Ph.D., AWIS has lost one of the pivotal figures in its history and a firebrand in the feminist movement.

Trained as an endocrinologist and physiologist, Ramey first came to national prominence in 1970 after she publicly took on a Democratic leader (Edgar F. Berman, a retired surgeon and confidant of former vice president Hubert H. Humphrey) who pronounced women unfit for important jobs because of "raging hormonal influences."

Berman went further, stating, "Suppose we had a president in the White House, a menopausal woman president who had to make the decision of the Bay of Pigs?" (He meant the Cuban missile crisis.)

Ramey was moved to action. In a letter to the editor, she wrote, "As an endocrinologist in good standing, I was startled to learn that ovarian hormones are toxic to brain cells."

She went on to remind the public that during the Cuban missile crisis, the nation *had* a president who suffered from a severe hormonal imbalance: John F. Kennedy, who had Addison's disease, an endocrine disorder.

Her comments were widely reproduced, and Ramey was soon in great demand in the news media and on the lecture circuit.

As AWIS president from 1973-74, Ramey set up the first AWIS Washington, D.C. office and established the AWIS Educational Foundation with her personal funds.

Ramey also used her clout as AWIS president to recall a sexist medical school textbook. At the time, the overwhelming majority of med school students were male and the textbook clearly appealed to prurient interests with salacious photos of nude and partially clad women as well as numerous jocular references, of the wink-wink, nudge-nudge variety, such as, "Sorry boys. Your patients are never going to look this good!"

Ramey phoned the publisher, telling him, "I represent the largest organization of women scientists in the country and we demand this book be withdrawn." [In numerous retellings of the tale, she would add as an aside, "Of course, the publisher didn't know that at the time our membership wouldn't fill a phone booth."] The publisher was indignant and retorted "Dr. Ramey, you don't want to be known as a book burner, do you?" To which she said, "No, I don't. *You're* the one who's going to burn these books." There was much back and forth on this until *Time* magazine got wind of the story. After it became a national story the textbook was withdrawn.

I first got to know Estelle Ramey, in 1991, over the phone when preparing press materials for the AWIS 20th anniversary. I asked for a photo. She said, "I'll send you one that makes me look like Eleanor Roosevelt." The news release went out to the media with clear instructions that the story wasn't public information until such-and-such date. A few days before that date, Estelle called to say CNN had broken the "embargo" and called to interview her. She said, "My dear, you are going to rise to the top of your profession if you're able to get CNN interested in this little AWIS event."

In Washington, D.C., the day of the AWIS anniversary, she arrived and walked into the room like she owned it. But she wasn't imperious. What impressed me about Ramey was that she made her presence known, but didn't take over the show. She just wanted to know where she was needed and was quite gracious about our shoestring event.

That evening, when it was time to give her remarks, there was a hilarious moment when she stepped up to the microphone. She suddenly disappeared because the lectern was too tall for her. A box or some suitable riser was hastily arranged for her to stand on. She departed from her prepared remarks by stating "In my next life I'm coming back as a cat, so I can just jump up here."

Of the many things she said that evening, what has stuck with me was the impunity that a successful career and emeritus status afforded her, and why she felt it important to be an outspoken voice for young women scientists whose careers would be at risk if they did the same. I was also enormously impressed to learn she donated her speaker fees to shelters for battered women, who she felt are truly the most vulnerable individuals in our society.

Born in 1917, Estelle Ramey received her doctorate in physiology from Georgetown University, later joining the faculty at Georgetown University Medical School as a professor of biophysics and physiology.

Throughout her research, which focused on the relationship between hormones and stress, Ramey was struck by the fact that men seem to be at a natural hormonal disadvantage: they are more inclined toward aggression, die sooner and are more prone to heart attacks and strokes.

She was often quoted as saying, "Maleness is a biological risk factor."

[By the way, Edgar Berman, who helped propel Ramey into the national spotlight, died in 1987, at 68, of a heart attack.]

Estelle Ramey died on Sept. 9, 2006, at the age of 89, of complications of Alzheimer's disease. Earlier this year, I and other long-time AWIS members were interviewed by Sarah Ramey, a student in the Columbia University MFA writing program. Sarah's thesis is the biography of her grandmother – Dr. Estelle Ramey.

Talk about leaving a legacy.

Women's Right to Fight HIV/AIDS

By Paula Campos Soto

During this year's International AIDS conference in Toronto, Canada, scientists, politicians, and health advocates, including former U.S. President Bill Clinton and philanthropist Bill Gates, discussed advances and setbacks in the fight against HIV/AIDS. To no surprise, women's issues were a constant theme.

Initially, HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, mostly affected men. Today, around the world, women and adolescent females make up over half of those infected with HIV, while in sub-Saharan Africa, 60 percent of HIV infections are among women and girls.

In the U.S., women are quickly becoming the new victims; they now account for 30 percent of all new HIV infections, and the rate of AIDS cases suffered by women tripled between 1986 and 2001. But the most worrisome statistic is that, according to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2002 (the last year for which data is available), HIV infection was the leading cause of death for African American women aged 25-34 years old.

"No matter where she lives, who she is, or what she does – a woman should never need her partner's permission to save her own life," said Gates, whose foundation recently pledged \$287 million to speed development of a vaccine.

Gates stressed the importance of putting the power of prevention in the hands of women. Prevention strategies that allow them to protect themselves without their partner's knowledge or objection are essential in cultures that limit women's rights.

Some of the most promising strategies presented at this year's conference included microbicide gels and pre-exposure prophylaxis with antiretroviral pills. The gels disrupt the virus and prevent

infections, and the pills, taken once a day, can stop the virus from replicating.

Another important step in preventing infection is fighting the stigma associated with HIV infection. Clinton discussed this topic. "If there is aggressive effort against stigma and an absolute guarantee you'll have the medicine, the cure you need, then we could have more people know their status, and I think more people would be willing to do whatever is necessary not to infect others."

With his comment, Clinton also raised another important aspect of the fight against AIDS. One of the most aggravating limitations to prevention strategies is the fact that more than 90 percent of infected people worldwide are unaware of their HIV status.

Advocates at the conference stressed the need to change from the current strategy of voluntary testing to "provider-initiated-testing," in which health-care workers would take the initiative and recommend that patients get tested.

Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, was quoted in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Bulletin as saying: "The best way to stop HIV, quite simply, is to not allow it to spread from person to person. Interrupt the chain of transmission. That's the way you outsmart the virus."

With more than 8000 deaths each day from AIDS-related diseases, and approximately 40 million new infections in the last year alone, there is a desperate need for effective prevention strategies.

Women already make up the majority of the population infected with HIV; therefore prevention strategies should be tailored with women's issues in mind. Microbicide gels, creams and antiretroviral pills that can prevent infection would allow women to protect themselves, at the same time thwarting HIV until a vaccine is developed.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT



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AWIS Member News

In this section of the Newsletter, we report on the accomplishments (new jobs, promotions, awards, publications, etc.) of AWIS-SD members. If you have any news to report, send it to newsletter@awissd.org and write "AWIS Member News" in the subject heading.

About the AWIS Newsletter

The AWIS Newsletter is published six times per year and provides AWIS members and supporters with information on Chapter activities, career development, and issues related to women in science.

November/December Newsletter staff:

Alice Budai	Hima Joshi	Siobhan Malany
Janice Payne	Sama Tamrakar	Amber Dance
Paula C. Soto		

If you are an AWIS-SD member, we encourage you to contribute articles to the Newsletter. Please send articles as MS Word attachments to newsletter@awissd.org. News articles should not exceed 250 words, and event summaries should not exceed 500 words. Feature articles (special-interest stories and profiles) should not exceed 1000 words. The submission deadline for the next issue is December 1, 2006.

Not getting AWIS-SD member e-mails?

Update your contact information!

Go to the member services page using the following link:
<https://www.sgmeet.com/awis/memberlogin.asp>

You will need your member ID and password. If you need assistance, please contact AWIS Member Services by phone (866-657-AWIS) or by e-mail (membership@awis.org).

AWIS-San Diego Sponsors

AWIS-San Diego thanks our corporate sponsors for their generous support. Donations from corporate sponsors help us fund scholarship awards, monthly events and Strategy Sessions, community outreach efforts, the Newsletter and the website.

For more information about how your company can support AWIS-SD, send e-mail to fundAWISsd@gmail.com.

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To contact the Board, visit the following website:

<http://awis.npaci.edu/officers/biographies.htm>

AWIS National Councilor (San Diego Chapter)

Sonya Summerour Clemmons

To contact Sonya, visit: <http://www.awis.org/network/board.html>

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