

Awards and Citations

2023 Paleontological Society Pojeta Award Acceptance Speech by Lisa D. White

Lisa D. White*

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I am incredibly grateful to be honored by the Paleontological Society and receive the John and Mary Lou Pojeta Award for recognition of exceptional professional and public service in furtherance of the field of paleontology. Thank you to Seth Finnegan and Charles Marshall for nominating me, and I owe a debt of gratitude to the University of California Museum of Paleontology (UCMP) community of staff and graduate students who inspire me in education and outreach work.

As I reflect on my own career pathway and aspirations, I cannot remember a time when public engagement in Earth science was not one of my professional goals. From my years as an undergraduate geology major at San Francisco State University to graduate school in Earth science at the University of California Santa Cruz, sharing science broadly reinforced the enthusiasm I felt for the geosciences. Growing up in a family of educators and activists where “each one teaches one” was the family mantra, I had a bird’s eye view of how to achieve educational equity through greater community participation. After applying those principles during a 22-year career at San Francisco State University as Professor of Geosciences, I came to the UCMP in 2012 eager to share science with diverse audiences and the broader public through paleontology. The positive effect of a museum experience is something I remember

well in my youth during frequent visits to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco.

As the Director of Education and Outreach at the UCMP, my current responsibilities include extending the reach of our popular web-based resources and leading our education and outreach team in developing new learning materials on evolution and the fossil record, the nature and process of science, and global climate change. I maintain research interests in micropaleontology and oceanography, and direct programs that provide opportunities for undergraduate students to connect to these disciplines through science experiences aboard ships.



From leading field experiences for undergraduate students to mentoring graduate students and early-career scientists to advance community college student opportunities in paleontology, I continually strive to change the culture of Earth science by engaging diverse communities in authentic science experiences and empowering the next generation of science leaders. In receiving this award, I am excited and inspired to continue sharing paleontology with the public, encouraging wider awareness of who paleontologists are and the rich educational value of our discipline.

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