

2013 ChemLuminary Award

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NASHVILLE

Alice Popejoy, 2012 Public Policy Fellow for AWIS, presented perspectives from Capitol Hill on women in STEM to local section members and women undergraduate and graduate students. They provided women chemists with vital public policy information on issues of concern to women in STEM during a national election year. Some of these issues focused on the gender wage gap, work-life satisfaction, leadership, and importance of mentoring. The event was outstanding because of the public policy information that was provided to the audience. This program supported the mission of the WCC by providing a forum for women chemists and all women in STEM during a critical election year. Women undergraduate students who hosted this event also learned networking, organizational, and communication skills needed to be professionals in the chemical sciences. Students were given the opportunity to plan this event and to spend one-on-one time with the speaker.

VIRGINIA

The WCC of the Virginia Local section hosted a Chemistry Career Panel that featured **Jeanette Brown**, a chemist and author of the book, *African American Women Chemists*. In addition to speaking about her career, Ms. Brown gave a talk about the careers of some of the first African American women chemists, followed by a book signing and reception. College women often don't know the paths they can follow with a chemistry degree. The small number of women faculty at some institutions limits the diversity students will see. Without proper career planning, women disproportionately leak out of the chemistry pipeline. The panel allowed students to interact with chemists who have followed diverse career paths and who are at different stages of their careers. All the speakers were women chemists who could provide an immediate connection to the women students. Van transportation allowed students to attend from several local universities and community colleges.

2013 WCC Rising Stars

DR. CATHERINE S. PATTERSON

As an undergraduate, 2013 Rising Star Award Winner **Catherine Schmidt Patterson** became interested in the connections between science, art history, and the conservation of cultural heritage. The



first papers she read about the scientific analysis of works of art made her realize that she could apply her scientific training and skills to preserve our collective cultural patrimony. From then on, she was hooked. She tried to stay informed about the happenings in the field of conservation science throughout graduate school while earning her Ph.D. at Northwestern University, where her research focused on the fundamental physical chemistry governing the

interaction of indoor air pollutants with catalytic surfaces. After graduation, she was selected for the prestigious Postdoctoral Fellowship in Conservation Science at Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and her path was set. She is now an Associate Scientist and a member of the GCI's Collections Research Laboratory. Her primary areas of research are the use of non- or minimally invasive techniques such as Raman microspectroscopy and X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy to study works of art, the development of new analytical methodologies, and technology transfer for the benefit of cultural heritage science.

Catherine loves that her work can be different each day. She can be working on 14th century panel paintings in the morning and 20th century photography in the afternoon. The variety of the work and the ability to juggle several projects simultaneously ensures that she consistently has new challenges to overcome, new things to learn, and new perspectives on each of her projects.

Catherine feels fortunate to have had advisors who all have been both great scientists but also incredible mentors. Her advisors were willing to include her in all aspects of the work that she was doing. Beyond the experimental day-to-day activities, she was always included in preparing grant proposals and in sharing her work with a variety of audiences both formally and informally. From that experience, she gained the ability to effectively communicate both the facts and their significance in a way that is accessible both to other scientists and non-scientists.

Catherine enjoys chemistry in the kitchen as she loves to cook and bake and inflicts her "kitchen experiments" on her colleagues from time to time. She also loves spending time outdoors. Hiking, biking, camping, and kayaking are her favorite ways of leaving the world behind for a few hours or days at a time.

Catherine's advice: Be bold, proud of your accomplishments, and willing to toot your own horn. Take on new challenges to grow and learn in the process. Actively seek out opportunities to improve your skills and knowledge. Do what you love—whatever part of the chemistry profession you are in—if you are passionate about the work, you are more likely to be successful overall.

—Lisa Houston

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