

Successful Women in Chemistry Series—Continued

Continued from page 6

Prof. Burrows credits two women with having a profound impact early in her career. The first is the late **Karen Wetterhahn** who inspired her to always be encouraging of others and to convey excitement for science. The second is the late **Margaret (Peggy) Etter** who always thought of the students first. Prof. Burrows learned from her that advisors should not try to clone themselves – they should identify unique strengths in students and foster those qualities. Prof. Burrows is no stranger to the challenges of work-life balance, having raised triplets while establishing and running a highly successful research group, doing a significant amount of service for her department and scientific community, and mentoring many junior scientists. She does, however, believe in prioritization of commitments and has even learned to say "no" once in a while!

Once again, WCC sends warm congratulations to both *Jillian* and *Cindy*, and look forward to their contributions to the ACS journals in the coming years! We are extremely pleased to see two highly accomplished women in these important roles.

Professor Jennifer Schomaker By Amy Baliya



Professor **Jennifer Schomaker**, a winner of the 2014 Rising Stars Award, always loved chemistry. As the sibling of seven younger brothers and sisters, Jennifer never received a chemistry set for Christmas due to the possibility of what parts would be ingested by fellow family members. Instead, she became a lab assistant her junior year in high school which allowed her access to the lab stockroom and the chance to experiment with chemicals. As she stated, "If I hadn't had that opportunity to discover and 'play' on my own, I probably would have ended up

a physician- the process of scientific exploration was key to stimulating my interest in chemistry." To fuel this drive for chemistry, *Jennifer's* high school chemistry teacher encouraged her to experiment, provided her with his old college textbooks, and helped arrange for her to attend college courses during her senior year.

Following high school, *Jennifer* went to Saginaw Valley State University and started working during her freshman year at Dow Chemical to help pay for college. At Dow, she began in the Organic Chemicals and Polymer Laboratory Group, examining biocatalytic methods for the synthesis of enantiomerically pure monomers, before transferring to the Agricultural Chemi-

cal Process Research Group to work on route selection and scale-up of two new herbicides. With the support of her husband and two young daughters and the advice from senior colleagues at Dow, Jennifer left industry to enroll in graduate school. She completed her M.S. degree with **Prof. Thomas J. Delia** at Central Michigan University developing selective cross-coupling reactions of pyrimidines and synthesizing molecules active against *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia. Afterwards, she attended Michigan State University for her Ph.D. and worked with **Professor Babak Borham** on the development of ylide-mediated ring expansions of epoxides and aziridines. Upon obtaining her Ph.D. in 2006, Jennifer was a NIH post-doctoral fellow for **Professor Robert G. Bergman** at University of California, Berkeley examining the reactivity of cobalt dinitrosoalkane complexes to functionalize alkene C-H bonds.

In 2009, she joined the faculty at University of Wisconsin-Madison where she performs research in methodology development such as new metal complexes exhibiting ligand-based reactivity and new catalysts for oxidative cyclization reactions. She loves working with talented people and watching her students become scientists. Throughout her career path, *Jennifer* has had the loving support of her family. She described how her family often traveled to the lab to bring dinner and help take care of the household chores. Furthermore, she credits her research advisors for patiently understanding her unique situation.

To the future women chemists, *Jennifer* gave this advice: "It's important to find mentors that believe in you and your abilities. Have the courage to speak up for what you need and to do your job well. If you fail, do not tell yourself you can't do it- pick yourself up and try again." Jennifer's life experiences have demonstrated that through hard-work and determination, anyone can be successful. Congratulations!

Dr. Katherine Ayers By Samina Aza



Dr. Katherine Ayers is the Director of Research at Proton OnSite where develops R&D strategy in membrane-based electrochemical devices, and maintains multi-year technology roadmap. She joined Proton in 2007 and before that worked at Energizer Battery Company for 10 years, serving as Staff Technology Engineer. She is internationally recognized as a leader in research and advancement of electrochemistry.

Continued on Page 8