

Citation for Dr. Renee M. Clary

2025 Mary C. Rabbitt Award

Athena Owen Nagel, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS

It is my honor to announce Dr. Renee Clary, as the 2025 recipient of the Mary C. Rabbit History award. Renee is a Professor of Geology, and Director of the Dunn-Seiler Museum, at Mississippi State University.

Dr. Clary has a passion for the history of science and has contributed a large volume of both work and service to the history of geology community, both nationally and internationally. Her research ranges from the history of scientific illustration, considering the work of Charles Knight and Henry De La Beche, the history of geology and geoheritage, and the early contributions of women in geology, including Mary Anning, and Florence Bascom. While her work has focused on the history of geology, she has been intentional about finding ways to share that historical knowledge for the educational enrichment of others

In addition to Dr. Clary's own publications, she has used editing to bring together many others in the field, co-editing many volumes including GSA Memoir 218, *The Evolution of Paleontological Art*, edited with Dr. Gary Rosenberg and Dallas Evans, GSA Special Paper 535, *Museums at the Forefront of the History and Philosophy of Geology*, co-edited with Dr. Gary Rosenberg and the Geological Society of London Special Publication 543, *Geology's Significant Sites and Their Contributions to Geoheritage*, with Drs. Eric Pyle and William Andrews.

While Dr. Clary is an accomplished researcher, it's her implementation of that knowledge within science teaching that perhaps provides her largest impact. Her publications that incorporate the history of science in educational venues have been disseminated through science education, history of science, and geoscience focused journals, as well as pedagogical journals to benefit classroom teachers. Her work has been used at all educational levels, including K-12, in courses available for every community college in the state of Mississippi, and students at Mississippi State University. Clary has also mentored many junior faculty, and written grants to bring graduate students from many universities into the geosciences. Her commitment to helping and mentoring others is remarkable.

Dr. Clary's work embodies the heart of the Mary C. Rabbitt Award, and she is a very deserving recipient.

Kerry Magruder

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Phoenix constellation
Vincenzo Coronelli (Paris, 1693)

Dr. Renee Clary's research has resulted in 90 journal articles, 36 book chapters, and 500 peer-reviewed research presentations. Even a cursory survey of their titles, as listed on her brief vitae, reveals an impressive range of contributions spanning the history of geology; the history of geoheritage; the history of women in the geosciences; the history of scientific illustration; and the history of science in geoscience education. I fully endorse Athena Owen Nagel's assessment of Renee's contributions in each of these areas.

To supplement Dr. Nagel's comments I would like to emphasize that Dr. Clary's contributions to the field of the history and philosophy of geology relevant to this award are not limited to the outward face of her publications *per se*, but lie behind them. Historians labor to make visible the contributions of invisible figures in the communities we study. Similarly, Renee's efforts for the last 25 years have been devoted to increasing the participation of others in the history of the geosciences through collaborations, mentoring, service, organization and administration.

A simple example of this is Dr. Clary's role in the often thankless task of editing four major works in the history of geology.¹ Moreover, in at least three of these volumes, the books resulted from her organization of the conference sessions in which the papers were first presented. Without those sessions, there would have been no books. Conference organizers and editors are among those invisible technicians who grow the field by creating spaces that invite new scholars to participate in the history of geology community.

¹ *History of Geoscience: Celebrating 50 Years of INHIGEO* (Geological Society of London, 2017); *Museums at the Forefront of the History and Philosophy of Geology* (Geological Society of America, 2018); *The Evolution of Paleontological Art* (Geological Society of America, 2022); and *Geology's Significant Sites and their Contributions to Geoheritage* (Geological Society of London, 2024).

This focus on growing the community casts Dr. Clary's longstanding devotion to geoscience education in a more significant light. The next generation of historians of geology depends upon outreach today. Renee's commitment to public writing – in open access venues – is evident in “Rock Star” articles on Mary Anning (May 2019); Etheldred Benett (July 2023); and Winifred Golding (November 2023), published in *GSA Today* but made freely available on the HPGD website. Renee was also the driving force behind the Division's creation of historical signage in Lyme Regis to inform passers-by about the significance of Etheldred Benett; this instance provides a precedent for the kind of activity that the Division may embrace as it assumes a greater role in geoheritage efforts in coming years.

The larger vision of building the community of scholars who participate in the history and philosophy of geology and geoheritage has animated Dr. Clary in all her work. Renee welcomes anyone interested in the history of the geosciences, no matter their educational or disciplinary background. She is known to all who encounter her as a mentor to younger scholars, particularly to those who are disadvantaged in various ways. She champions social events at conferences designed to encourage students, and she seeks out opportunities to support student scholars one-on-one (I have heard this firsthand).

It is this selfless vision in service of the larger community that is evident in her service as Chair of the GSA History of Geology Division in two terms, and her other services to the profession whether in HESS, INHIGEO, or IUGS. Since her reception of the Gerald M. and Sue T. Friedman Distinguished Service Award eight years ago, Dr. Clary's contributions have only continued with renewed vigor. Three of her major books were published *after* receiving that previous award, but just as significantly, she has continued to serve the GSA not only as the HPG Division's permanent JTPC representative (responsible for proposing, recruiting, and organizing annual conference sessions), but also as a member of the US Geoheritage Advisory Group which transferred in December 2024 from the National Academy of

Sciences into the GSA, eventually landing in the History of Geology Division (now re-named History, Philosophy, and Geoheritage Division). Renee's participation in this geoheritage effort has been devoted to enhancing recognition of the importance of historical perspectives, raising awareness among non-historian geoheritage participants of the contested nature of geoheritage identifications and of the myriad contributions to geoheritage of marginalized and overlooked communities, whether women, indigenous peoples, fossilists, collectors, and even bibliographers. To the extent that geoheritage may attract more scholars to the history and philosophy of geology in coming years, Renee's efforts over the last ten years will come to fruition. Meanwhile, it is good that her efforts shall not remain invisible. This year, as we welcome new members to the Division in association with the Geoheritage Committee, the bridge-building efforts of Renee Clary make her a timely embodiment of the history of geology community and a worthy recipient of our Division's highest award.