

Renee M. Clary Response
2025 Mary C. Rabbit History, Philosophy and Geoheritage Award

I am incredibly honored to receive the Mary C. Rabbitt History, Philosophy, and Geoheritage Award, and I sincerely thank Athena Owen Nagel and Kerry Magruder for their generous citations.

The history of geology inspired me to seek education for knowledge's sake, outside of university courses. In the 1990s, Lt. Cdr. Ralph "Frenchy" Leblanc spoke at a Constitution Day luncheon, and he enthralled attendees with the story of his plane crash and eventual rescue as part of Admiral Richard Byrd's *Operation HighJump* Antarctic Expedition. That history hooked me—and I had to learn more. As a stay-at-home mother to four children, I enlisted my local library's assistance and requested dozens of books on polar exploration. The librarians laughed that they hosted a local 'polar expert,' and I was excited to be the *first person* to carefully open the pages of an early 20th century polar autobiography that had languished on a shelf in the northern US.

When I began my PhD program as a mother of six children, James Wandersee suggested that I incorporate the history of science into my geoscience education research. Here I am, 20+ years later, still pursuing the history of scientific illustration, Henry De la Beche, early women in geology, and, yes, polar exploration.

Because of my PhD in curriculum and instruction, Mississippi State University recruited me to research and optimize their online geology program. When I earned tenure, Sandra Herbert wrote, "with tenure comes freedom;" I was fortunate that my university supported my research in the history of geology and its benefits for geoscience education.

GSA's History of Geology Division (as it was originally known) first welcomed my research in 2004. When I served as Chair of the History and Philosophy of Geology Division (as it was next known), Ken Taylor and GSA requested my assistance for the 2014 International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences (INHIGEO) conference in Asilomar, CA. My INHIGEO election increased my history and philosophy of geology research. Michele Aldrich, Kennard Bork, and Bill Brice graciously mentored me; Gary Rosenberg was an especially valuable writing and editing mentor.

Meanwhile, my geoscience education research continued. James Wandersee and I tackled evaluation, design, and learning opportunities at US fossil parks, which promote visitors' geoliteracy while allowing them to retain a small number of personally collected fossils. When I later became piqued by the geoheritage movement in 2020, I realized that my fossil park research aligned with geoheritage. Athena Owen Nagel and I traversed Mississippi to bring local geoheritage and history to community college students, and I celebrated geoheritage with William "Drew" Andrews, Christina DeVera, Eric Pyle, and a long list of exceptional contributors.

I am truly humbled to join the list of remarkable researchers who have received the GSA Mary C. Rabbitt Award in the History, Philosophy, and Geoheritage Division (as it is now known). May my award be a testimony that it is never too late to begin, and that the GSA HPG Division will always welcome your research.

Renee M. Clary
20 October 2025