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ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Lesley Urasky, a science teacher at Saratoga Middle/High School in Saratoga, Wyoming, has been named the 2024 recipient of the American Geoscience Institute's (AGI) Edward C. Roy Jr. Award for Excellence in K-8 Earth Science Teaching.

Urasky earned both her bachelor's degree and master's degree in geology from the University of Wyoming and has achieved National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification in science as well as National Geographic certification in education. In her 26 years as a science educator, Urasky has often served as an instructional leader, including as Science Olympiad team sponsor and district planetarium director. In addition, she has participated in teacher-researcher experiences including with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, PolarTREC, and Montana State University.

Urasky's approach to earth science education blends geoscience knowledge, instructional technology, respect for students' diverse backgrounds, abundant interaction with peers, and attention to the interactions of Earth systems and human impacts. In a lesson on lunar phases and the Earth-sun-moon system, for example, Urasky connects geoscience learning to indigenous knowledge, including through independent exploration and reasoning.

"Lesley Urasky provides the kind of high-quality earth science education that helps young people understand the problem-solving possibilities of geoscience," said AGI Executive Director Dr. Jonathan Arthur. "Through creativity and innovation, she engages students in investigations that allow them to see how earth science concepts relate to real-world issues such as climate change, natural resource use, water conservation, and transportation and infrastructure."

As part of the award, Urasky will receive a \$2,500 cash prize and up to \$1,500 for professional travel. Both she and her school will receive plaques recognizing the accomplishment. Urasky will be recognized in a ceremony during the National Earth Science Teachers Association's Friends of Earth Science Reception at the National Science Teaching Association's Annual Conference in Denver in March 2024.

2024 National Finalists for the award are Alejandra Martinez from Eagle Pass, Texas, and Ellis Pawson III from Virginia Beach, Virginia. "As in past years, the selection of a single winner for this award is challenging, given the outstanding work being done by so many educators. These National Finalists demonstrate their deep commitment to their students through their many activities as dedicated educators and professionals," added Dr. Arthur. Each finalist will receive a plaque and publications from AGI.

Given annually, AGI's Edward C. Roy Jr. Award traditionally recognizes one classroom teacher from kindergarten to eighth grade for leadership and innovation in earth science education. The award is named in honor of Dr. Edward C. Roy Jr., who was a strong and dedicated supporter of Earth science education. To learn more, please see <https://www.americangeosciences.org/education/awards/roy>.

About AGI

The American Geosciences Institute (AGI), a federation of scientific and professional associations representing over a quarter-million geoscientists, is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to serving the geoscience community and addressing the needs of society. AGI headquarters are in Alexandria, Virginia.

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