Autumn Vandehey and Molly O'Halloran Named 2024 Wallace Scholarship Recipients

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Master's student Autumn Vandehey and doctoral student Molly O'Halloran have been awarded the 2024 Harriet Evelyn Wallace Scholarship for Women Geoscience Graduate Students from the American Geosciences Institute (AGI). This scholarship, which is given to women who are pursuing graduate degrees in geoscience, grants each recipient with a $5,000 award for one academic year.

Autumn Vandehey is a first-year graduate student in the Climate Science and Policy Program of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego. She plans to study how gender equality can mitigate climate change. Ms. Vandehey posits that empowering women to implement climate solutions can address climate change while advancing gender rights. She cites the example of a rural village in Guinea where women plant vitamin-rich trees called Moringa with support from the United Nations Women’s Fund for Gender Equality. The women use solar technology to maintain Moringa trees while promoting biodiversity, creating sustainable medicine and reducing soil erosion.

"Receiving the Harriet Evelyn Wallace Scholarship is a tremendous honor that supports my career as a woman in the geosciences," said Vandehey. "This scholarship provides the support I need to pursue a master's program in climate policy, enabling me to focus on my passion for addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change and gender equality."

Molly O'Halloran is a second-year doctoral student in Geology at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado. Her research explores the record of climate change in river sediments, targeting the ways fluvial fan systems respond to global warming in the Paleogene. Ms. O'Halloran and her collaborators are quantifying links between atmospheric drivers, rainfall, and river system responses to identify trends across multiple warming events and provide a framework for integrating novel sedimentological proxies with terrestrial paleoclimate research. This work, she says, is vital to tuning climate models and informing hazard assessments.

"I am deeply honored and grateful to be awarded the Harriet Evelyn Wallace Scholarship," said O'Halloran. "The support and confidence in my project and future career that the award represents are invaluable. These funds will be incredibly helpful as I continue collecting data for my thesis and training new sedimentologists in the canyons of northeastern Utah."

The Wallace Scholarship is celebrating 11 years of supporting women geoscientists in graduate school. The original bequest was given by Harriet Evelyn Wallace, who was one of the founding members of the Geoscience Information Society (GSIS), a national organization and AGI Member Society that facilitates the exchange of information in the geosciences. The scholarship is awarded to the top applicants who most demonstrate a strong likelihood of success as a professional geoscientist. Learn more at https://www.americangeosciences.org/scholarships/wallacescholarship/

To make a tax-deductible donation to support rising women geoscientists through the Wallace Scholarship Fund, please visit https://www.americangeosciences.org/donate

About AGI
The American Geosciences Institute (AGI), a federation of scientific and professional organizations 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.