Helena L. Filipsson

Associate Professor, Department of Geology, Lund University, Sweden, helena.filipsson@geol.lu.se

As an undergraduate and graduate student at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, I thought that all men and women were treated equally, and as long as I worked hard, nothing or no one would try to block me. My mantra was: it's all about being good at what you do and you will be recognized for the work you are doing. Now, 10 years after my PhD, I often hear young female students saying the exact same thing. I wish I could tell them that they are right. I wish that things had changed more, but they have not. Research shows over and over again that women and men are judged differently and are not given the same opportunities. The reasons are many and sometimes complex, but it can change if we want it to. Until then, this is the advice I give my female students:

1. Choose a subject that you are passionate about but that is also relevant—and fundable. Consider which fields are developing quickly versus shrinking. My interests lie in combining studies of past and current marine environments with proxy development. We use proxies when we can't measure an environmental variable directly, for instance, bottom water temperature 100,000 years ago, but we can measure Mg/Ca in bottom-dwelling foraminifera, a proxy for temperature.

2. If you marry, choose a supportive person. After finishing my PhD, I moved to the University of Bremen, Germany, for a two-year postdoc. It was tremendously important to my career—I can't stress the value of an international postdoc enough. My husband left his well-paid job in Sweden to come along—and was regarded almost as a saint for doing so.

3. Be flexible, seize opportunities. After Bremen, I moved back to Sweden to accept a four-year research grant from the Swedish Research Council. However, I also received a Fulbright Scholarship, so I decided to do both by going to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution for a year. This time, my husband didn't come along; instead, we commuted.

4. Have a family if that's something you want. Thriving academically in the USA, I concluded that I wanted to build my own research group, and I also wanted kids. I knew I had to live in a country where it's financially possible and socially acceptable to have a long and shareable parental leave and have access to good, affordable day care/preschools. We were lucky. Scandinavian countries are famous for their gender equality, even though there is still much work to do. Today, I'm an associate professor, with my own research group.

5. Dual careers are tough, but worth it. We have two boys who learned to pull a suitcase from an early age and know that sometimes mom is away on a boat for quite a long time, but she always comes back. I'm convinced that even though dual careers can be difficult, they are absolutely necessary for a healthy relationship. Our work is so much more than a job: it is part of our identity and gives us independence.

Traditions and norms influence how we act, interact, and judge each other. The lion's share of the responsibility for kids and family life is still often regarded as the woman's. It is completely doable for female academics to combine work and family life, but it requires support, and we need to be aware that the rules we play by are different.

To increase the number of women in academia, more of us have to stay, and we have to find ways to enable other women to stay. We must actively support each other, change leadership, and choose to work with male colleagues who also see the need for change. Many highly qualified women are leaving science and academia; it is a waste of resources and potential. We can change the system if we want to.

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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE OCEANOGRAPHY SOCIETY

Oceanography

Women in Oceanography: A Decade Later

Autobiographical Sketches

Women in Oceanography
Autobiographical Sketches

INTRODUCTION

For the first "Women in Oceanography" issue published in March 2005, Peggy Delaney and I started by sending emails to women we knew—and asking each recipient to invite two others to contribute sketches. For this compendium, I began by sending a similar email to all of the women who contributed sketches a decade ago—and asked them to forward the email to two others. The email invitation was also sent to women who have been involved in MPOWIR. The resulting 200+ autobiographies included in this section thus span the spectrum from early career, to mid-career, to late career scientists, and they cover the breadth of oceanography disciplines.

In preparing their autobiographical sketches, we asked women who did not submit an autobiographical sketch in 2005 to address the same topics suggested a decade ago:

1. Briefly, what are your scientific and research interests?
2. How did you choose your field of study?
3. What have you found most rewarding about being an ocean scientist and why?
4. What have been your greatest career challenges? How have you responded to these challenges?
5. How have you balanced your career and personal life? How has this balance influenced your career choices and your personal life?
6. Are the conditions for women in your area of the field different now than when you began your career? If so, how has that affected your work?
7. What other topics or issues would you like to address?

For women whose sketch was published in the 2005 special issue of *Oceanography*, we asked that they:

1. Summarize their employment status 10 years ago.
2. Discuss the career path they have taken since then.
3. Include any challenges they faced and how they handled them.
4. Provide any advice for young women oceanographers.

Reading these sketches makes me proud to be part of this amazing community of women oceanographers. I hope these stories inspire another generation of young women to become scientists.

— Ellen S. Kappel, Editor