

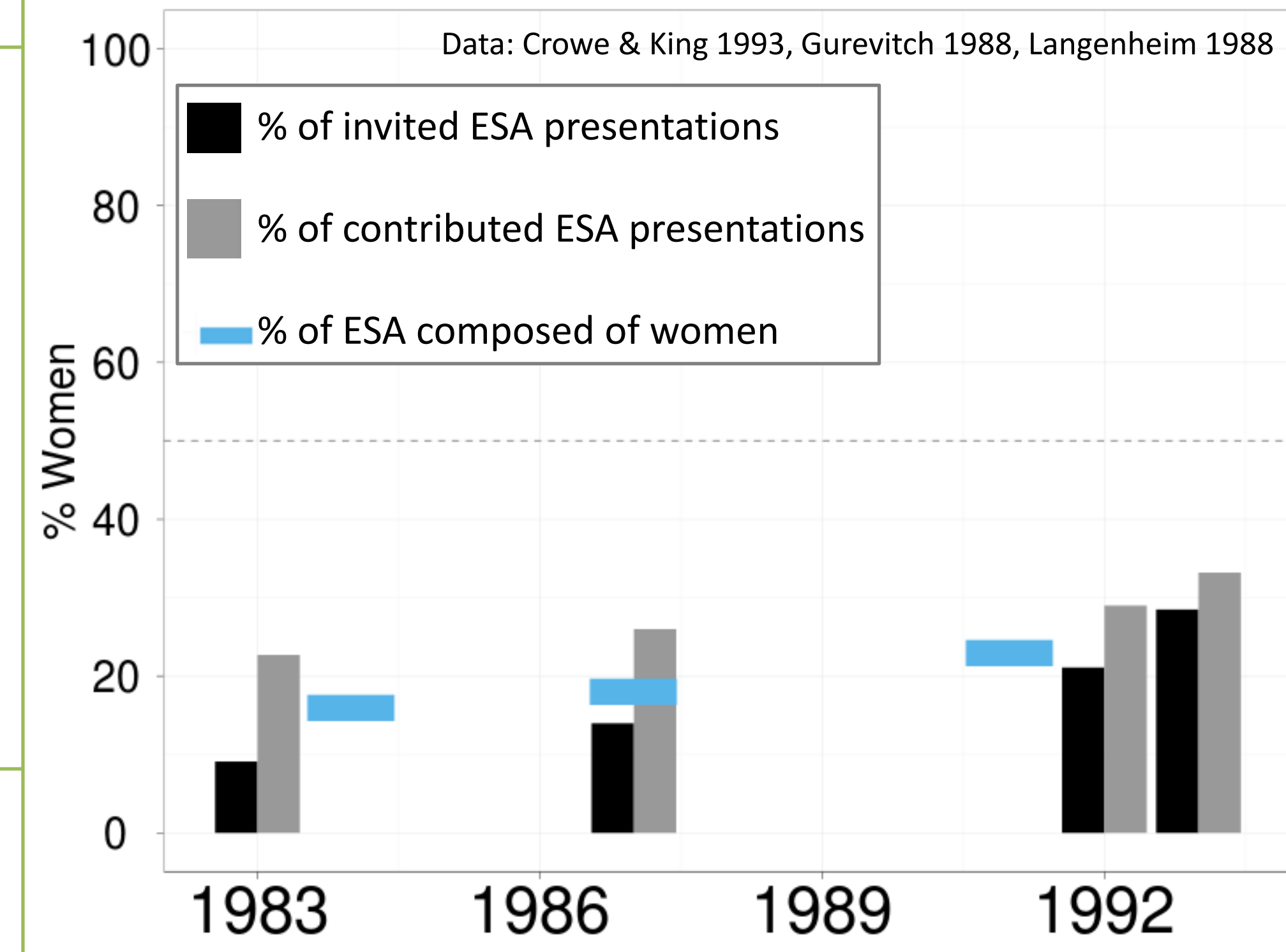
# The Ecological Society of America in the wake of three waves of feminism

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Feminist movements over the last century inspired massive legal and social change. The first major successes of feminist movements in the United States coincided with the founding of the Ecological Society of America. Here, we put the experiences of women in ESA into the larger context of feminism in the US.

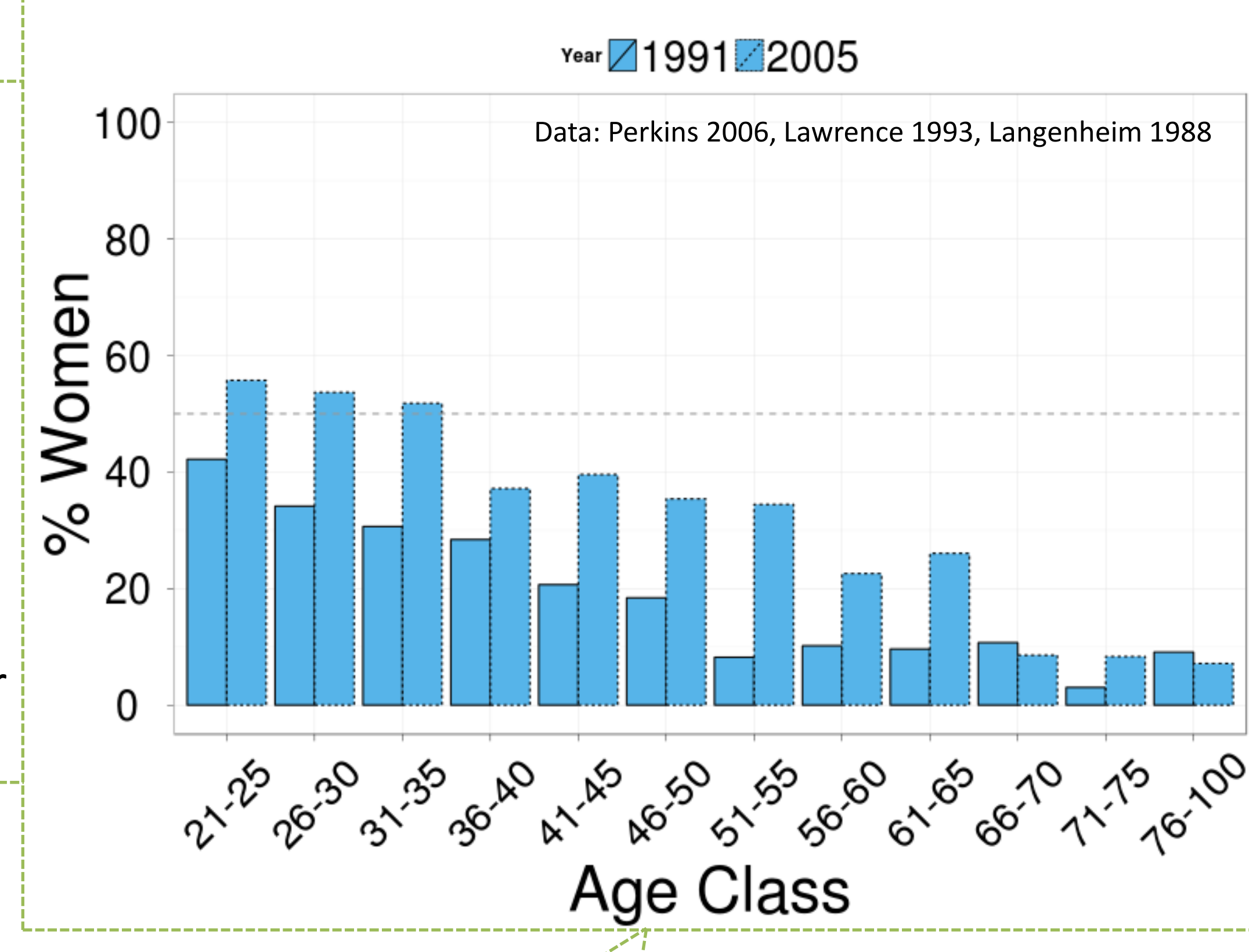
## Women giving invited and contributed presentations at ESA

- Between 1983 and 1993,
- Women gave fewer presentations at ESA than men
  - Women were invited to present less often than they contributed presentations
  - Women contribute presentations proportional to their membership in ESA

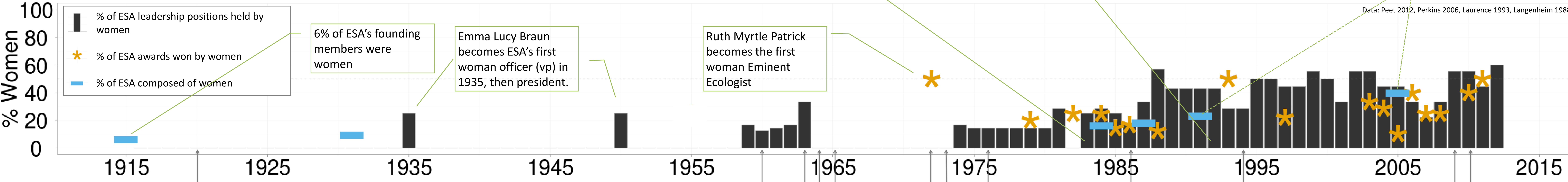


## Women members of ESA by age

- ESA collected age information from its members during surveys in 1991 and 2005.
- In 14 years,
- the percentage of women in ESA increased from **23 to 40%**
  - The percentage of women increased in almost all age classes, **exceeding 50%** for women at the earliest career stages



## Women in ESA edge closer to equality in society leadership and awards



**First wave**  
First wave feminism focused on women's suffrage, though early organizations like the Women's Christian Temperance Union had a much broader mission.

**Second Wave**  
Second wave feminism was committed to attaining complete legal and social equality for women. The energy and passion of this movement led to incredible legal and social change in the 1960s and 70s.

**Third Wave**  
Third wave feminism seeks to be more inclusive of diversity than previous feminist movements, examines intersections of different types of discrimination, and generally rejects essentialist views of gender.

## Pioneering women from each historical period faced different challenges

### Edith S. Clements, Ph.D. 1906



- First woman to receive a Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska
  - Interested in plant adaptations to altitude, wildflower identification, and education
- Positions**
- Unpaid field assistant and illustrator to her husband, Frederic E. Clements
  - Assistant botanist at University of Nebraska
  - Instructor at the University of Minnesota
  - Investigator and illustrator at the Carnegie Institute
- Publications**
- Ph.D. thesis in the Transactions of the American Microscopical Society
  - 10 books, most for a popular audience
  - 6 articles for popular science magazines, including *National Geographic*

"...it's much easier to marry someone who knows it all and if you know some yourself, and can draw and paint and take photographs and drive the car, and typewrite and a few things like that, you can go along the way I do."

### Jean H. Langenheim, Ph.D. 1953



- First woman president of the Association of Tropical Biology and International Society of Chemical Ecology
  - Second woman president of ESA and the Society of Economic Botany
  - Research spanned paleobotany, plant resins, and phytochemistry
- Positions include**
- Professor Emeritus at the University of California at Santa Cruz
- Publications**
- More than 130 peer-reviewed articles
  - 3 books, including a memoir

"I have pondered why, when early on in my solo career I felt overwhelmed with responsibilities, I did not rebel. I think, partly, I was driven by a sense that I didn't want to let down the women who might follow me."

### Jennifer M. Talbot, Ph.D. 2011



- Interested in plant-microbe interactions, biogeochemistry, feedbacks between global change and ecosystem function
  - 2011 Murray F. Buell Award winner
- Positions**
- NOAA post-doctoral fellow, University of Minnesota
- Publications**
- 8 peer-reviewed articles and 3 others

"The number one thing that bothers me about being a female in science is how easily dismissed I am relative to my male colleagues... It is rare, but it's happened multiple times. When it does happen, it's a little bit of a shock. By overlooked, I mean you say something and it's ... like you don't exist. And that, for me, is extremely challenging to handle gracefully."

