Phyllis D. Coley is the recipient of the George Mercer Award for 1984. The Mercer Award is presented annually to a young ecologist in recognition of an outstanding paper published during the previous two years.

Dr. Coley receives the award in recognition of her paper, "Herbivory and defense characteristics of tree species in a lowland tropical forest," published in Ecological Monographs in 1983 (53:209–233). In this paper, she carefully documents rates of herbivory in relation to the defensive characteristics of 46 tree species in a tropical rain forest. Her experimental approach, statistical rigor, and thoughtful discussion make this paper an important contribution to our understanding of herbivory in natural communities.

The research was completed while Dr. Coley was a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Biology Department at the University of Utah.

Written by H. Ronald Pulliam

Selection Committee:
H. Ronald Pulliam, Chair
David Allen
Jane Bock
Don Hall
Sam McNaughton
David Vleck
Peter Waser