

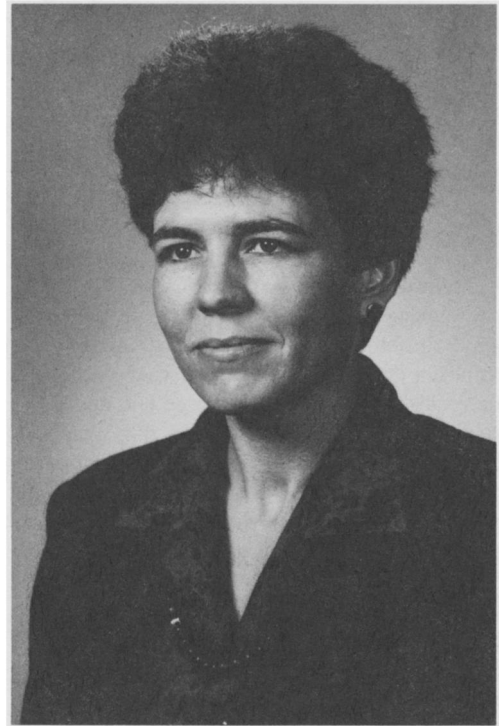
JANE LUBCHENCO, PRESIDENT

1992 - 1993

It is a privilege and humbling experience to be the biographer of our next President, Jane Lubchenco, who has already fashioned extraordinary careers in research, teaching, university administration and other major leadership positions. In writing this brief glimpse of the individual, trying to catch the personal essence underlying her style and charisma, I have had to walk the line between the details of an obituary and the positivity of a letter of recommendation. I have drawn my material from a complex of sources: her most recent c.v., an application to graduate school, the accompanying letters and statement of purpose, newspapers and other media events, and my own records.

Jane is a native of Colorado. Both parents were professionals and actively encouraged her interests in the natural sciences. Extensive hiking and camping in her native state enhanced these tendencies. One catalytic experience, occurring after her junior year at Colorado College, was the opportunity to participate in the invertebrate zoology course at the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole. She was invited by W. D. Russell-Hunter to do independent, post-course research, an experience that whetted her interest in biological phenomena. In her own words, "I got a taste of what research was like, and I just loved it." She entered graduate school interested in "regulatory mechanisms involved in physiology," became distracted by the intrigue and challenge of exploring natural population and community issues experimentally, and has been an ecologist since.

Parts of her master's research at the University of Washington, minimally influenced by me, were published in *Ecological Monographs*. Her doctoral dissertation, done at Harvard with Tom Schoener and F. E. Smith, led immediately to the Citation Classic (*American Naturalist* 1978) on benthic algal responses to variable grazing intensity. Her first academic appointment was at Harvard where she was Assistant Professor 1975-1977. She then moved to Oregon State University, gained Full Professor rank in 1989, and now chairs the Department of Zoology. This described path is deceptively simple. Jane and her husband Bruce Menge have had to explore innovative approaches in attaining their professional and personal goals. Both have been intimately involved in raising their two sons; both wished to continue their teaching



and research. Upon moving to Oregon State, they split a single Assistant Professor position into two separate, half-time appointments. Each taught half time, did research and shared child-raising responsibilities. After 10 years their positions were increased to three-quarters time, after two further years to full time. They credit the flexibility inherent in this scheme with allowing them to develop a rich range of individual and collective interests.

Jane's research accomplishments embody an unequalled pluralism: substantial interest in both physical and biological effects; comparative research in at least three major marine nearshore ecosystems (eastern Pacific, New England, and Panama); equal facility with plant and animal aspects of community ecology. Her studies have brought appropriate recognition: a Mercer Award, 1979, shared with Bruce Menge; AAAS Fellow, 1990; an honorary Doctor of Science degree from Drexel University, 1992; and most recently, designation as a PEW Scholar in Conservation and the Environment. The time course of these awards

reflects accurately her evolving interests. The hands-on science was and continues to be entirely marine, centered primarily on the interaction between grazers and intertidal, benthic algae. The hallmarks of these studies: perceptive description of the intimate biology of the target species, revealing experiments, and convincing explanation are characteristically visible. There is an almost intuitive feel for what constitutes both an interesting and important problem. These traits are clearly expressed in her first paper (*Oecologia* 17:293–316, 1974), an underappreciated gem on intertidal foraging. They are equally visible in her initial quest for financial support. Long before “supply side ecology” was fashionable, Jane (1972) was seeking funds to study “the potential role of larval settlement in regulating populations of a dominant intertidal starfish.” Her current work is increasingly international in scope and applied in focus. She has established close ties with Juan Carlos Castilla’s group in Chile: collaborative research in interhemispheric community comparisons is in progress. Her own lab is beginning to examine the extensive data base associated with the effects of thermal discharge from nuclear power stations as a means of evaluating possible consequences of global warming on nearshore communities. In a general sense the majority of her papers illustrate a deeply held conviction that ecological research benefits when questions are examined at different levels of organization. Thus one finds, in interesting combination, some mix of studies on the individual (behavior, foraging), populations (life history details, patterns of distribution and abundance), and communities (zonation, predator–prey and plant–herbivore interactions). These and a long-standing interest in biogeographic comparison add substantive detail to her global perspective.

Her commitment to our Society has been substantial and includes terms as Council Member

at Large (1982–1984), Chair of the Awards Committee (1983–1986), Vice-President (1988–1989) and now President. Two other services, however, provide a clearer hint at deeply held and vigorously pursued convictions. She has served not only on numerous NSF/NRC/NAS committees, but is also on the editorial board of our new journal, *Ecological Applications*. Most significant, though, was her spiritual and intellectual leadership of the Sustainable Biosphere Initiative (SBI) and her participation in its international derivative under the auspices of SCOPE. Her participation in the emerging AMIGO (Americas’ Interhemisphere Geobiosphere Organization) is yet another example of her willingness to assume a leadership role in efforts to focus the best possible science on critical environmental issues.

Jane will bring to her presidency a record of superior scientific accomplishment. Those of us privileged to know her personally would call her a naturally charismatic leader. Those who watched her describe and defend SBI at our Society’s Snowbird meeting glimpsed her effective communication and launching of an enterprise central to our Society’s future. The hand that will guide us is experienced, firm and generous (but don’t arm wrestle with her; she’s only been beaten once to my knowledge, and that time by subterfuge).

Ecology has become a household word, and its troublesome implications are increasingly debated in political and economic circles. I can think of no one better qualified or able to lead us down this critically important yet uncharted path than our next President.

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