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## **CLAG Carl O. Sauer Distinguished Scholar Award for 2002: Sally Horn**

Betty E. Smith



It is with great pleasure that the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers grants the 2002 Carl O. Sauer Distinguished Scholar Award to Sally Horn in recognition of her scholarly creativity and body of work as a biogeographer, paleoenvironmental reconstructionist, and Latin Americanist. Sally's research can be broadly described as the study of the impact of human activity and climate change on vegetation in the Latin American tropics. Active in field exploration and sampling, she is currently investigating the long-term environmental history of rainforest, dry forest, and high montane environments in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and southeastern United States. Together with her collaborators and graduate students, she tramps through tropical swamps, extracts sediment samples from remote lake bottoms and ascends tropical peaks in search of glacial evidence. When in the field she and

her assistants rise early and often ride mules to reach their remote destinations.

Sally is professor of geography at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She was born in San Jose, California and completed her undergraduate and graduate studies at University of California, Berkeley. At age 22 she completed her B.A. in Geography with highest honors, presenting a thesis entitled, "Late Holocene Sedimentation at Zaca Lake, Santa Barbara County, California." Three years later she received her M. A. in Geography defending her thesis, "Late Quaternary Vegetation Change in Western Costa Rica: Pollen Evidence from Deep Sea Drilling Project Site 565." She received her Ph.D. in Geography in 1986, demonstrating her continued interest in Costa Rican vegetative change in her dissertation, "Fire and Páramo Vegetation in the Cordillera de Talamanca, Costa Rica." She continues today to pursue her early research themes: quaternary vegetation and climate change in the Latin American tropics; fire ecology and fire history; and human influences on vegetation.

Sally has persistently sought support for her research. She has independently received no fewer than twenty-five small grants ranging up to \$10,000, from University of Tennessee, University of California, and from external sources such as U.S. Information Agency, Association of American Geographers, National Geographic Society (NGS), the Southern Regional Education Board, and National Science Foundation (NSF). She secured her most substantial financial support for research by way of twenty-three collaborative projects, most notably her two largest projects funded by Mellon Foundation, "Eco-

logical Land Use History in the New World Tropics” and “Comparative Land Use History in the New World Tropics: Reconstructing Regional Patterns” (with R.L. Sanford, Jr.).

Beyond making significant research contributions to her field, Sally Horn is a fine teacher, having received several outstanding teaching awards from the University of Tennessee. She has served on 66 graduate student committees of which she chaired 22.

Her service to the university and her discipline is no less daunting, serving on dozens of committees, acting as grant proposal reviewer for nine national and international agencies, serving as manuscript reviewer for more than a dozen scholarly journals and half a dozen scholarly presses. An active participant in professional meetings and presentations, since 1983 she has individually or collaboratively presented 72 papers. Many of these presentations have led to individual or joint publications in major scholarly journals.

Her most substantial field research experience to date is in Costa Rica, where she presently directs and co-directs projects funded by the Mellon Foundation and NGS, analyzing pollen grains, charcoal fragments, diatoms, and other plant fossils in ancient lakes, soils and swamp sediments to reconstruct long-term environmental history. She and her collaborators are assembling data on prehistoric agriculture, fire and climate in lowland rain forests, dry forests, and savannas, as well as climate and fire history of montane oak forests and shrub-dominated *páramos* above the tree line. Comparisons are being made with modern lakes and sediments throughout Costa Rica. The objective is to clarify relationships between microfossil assemblages and the water chemistry, vegetation, climate, and disturbance history of lakes and watersheds. She conducts her research with faculty and graduate students from the U.S.A., Canada, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic.

She is also studying the chronology of glacial advances on Costa Rica’s highest peak, Cerro Chirripó (3819 m), as well as in the Dominican Republic. Sally has stated that “the unmistakably glacial origin of certain features on the Chirripó massif were recognized forty years ago, but we were the first to begin the systematic dating and interpretation of deposits.” Sally notes that her collaborative research in the Dominican Republic has “yielded the first evidence available on the long-term incidence of fire in highland pine forests, and on vegetation dynamics following fires in highland plant communities.”

It seems quite natural to present Sally Horn an award designed to honor the influential work of Carl O. Sauer. She can trace her academic lineage to Sauer through her own advisor, Roger Byrne, who studied under Bill Denevan, who was a student of Jim Parsons, who was mentored by Carl O. Sauer. Thus, Sally can be considered a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Sauer scholar. To some extent many aspects of Sally Horn’s research takes inspiration from the legacy of Carl O. Sauer. Though she considers herself a junior person among CLAGistas and is humbled by the receipt of this prestigious award usually reserved for senior scholars she is, without doubt, a very deserving recipient. Her scholarly work and on-going projects are a fitting tribute to the Berkeley Sauer tradition.