

Preface to special collection: 30 years of the Nellie Yeoh Whetten Award—celebrating the women of the AVS

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Note: This paper is part of the Special Topic Collection on 30 years of the Nellie Yeoh Whetten Award—Celebrating the Women of the AVS.

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On the occasion of the 30th year of the AVS Nellie Yeoh Whetten Award, this special topic collection highlights outstanding leading women scientists working in the areas of materials, interfaces, and processing. The Nellie Yeoh Whetten Award was established in 1989 by Timothy J. Whetten, friends and family of Nellie Yeoh Whetten, and the AVS. The Award recognizes the excellence of women graduate students in the technologies and sciences of interest to AVS.

Through this special collection we hope to inspire young investigators and encourage the next generation of women and under-represented minority scientists and engineers. Each paper is led by women scientists and demonstrates their impact in fields including plasma technologies, catalysis, energy storage, and environmental science. In addition, these women have a significant impact on their wider communities. For example, Jani Ingram¹ assists the Navajo nation by studying environmental uranium and arsenic contamination and how they affect the water supplies.

Women at all stages of their careers have contributed. In addition to their scientific and technological work, the authors also share their experiences and some advice on what they would tell their sixteen-year-old selves. There are many similar themes in these answers: ask questions, be persistent, find good mentors and role models, and (perhaps most importantly) pursue your interests. As Lisa Porter² elegantly states “Don’t let other people define your success. Success is what makes you happy and gives you a sense of pride in helping to make the world a little bit better place.”

My thanks to each and every author who has contributed to this special collection; I look forward to your continuing contributions to our community.

REFERENCES

¹J. C. Ingram, L. Jones, J. Credo, and T. Rock, *J. Vac. Sci. Technol. A* **38**, 031003 (2020).

²L. M. Porter and J. R. Hajzus, *J. Vac. Sci. Technol. A* **38**, 031005 (2020).