Ellen Druffel elected to National Academy of Sciences

UCI Earth system science professor is an expert in the ocean carbon cycle
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Brian Bell
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Ellen Druffel, Distinguished Professor and Fred Kavli Chair in Earth System Science, has been elected a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

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Sheila Griffin / UCI

Irvine, Calif., April 30, 2020 – University of California, Irvine chemical oceanographer and biogeochemist Ellen Druffel has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences, one of the world's most distinguished scientific organizations.

One of 146 scientists from around the world to have been elected, Druffel researches the carbon cycle of the planet's oceans and how humanity's burning of fossil fuels affects that cycle.

“I was shocked,” said Druffel, Distinguished Professor and Fred Kavli Chair in Earth System Science, who learned of the honor Monday morning when her colleague Susan Trumbore, UCI professor of Earth system science, texted her about it. “I didn’t know what she was talking about.”

Druffel is an expert in measuring a special kind of carbon, called bomb radiocarbon, that was produced in the atmosphere and oceans by thermonuclear bomb tests in the 1950s and 1960s. She and her colleagues use bomb radiocarbon, detectable today in places such as coral reefs, plants and animals, to illuminate the paths carbon can take once it is in the environment.

“Ellen Druffel is among the most accomplished scholars in her field, and her election to the National Academy of Sciences is a tremendous achievement,” said James Bullock, dean of the School of Physical Sciences. “Following an example set by the founding chair, Ralph Cicerone, Professor Druffel has helped to build the Earth system science department into what it is today, and she’s now the fifth ESS faculty member to be elected to the academy. On behalf of the School of Physical Sciences, I offer my warmest congratulations.”

Hal S. Stern, UCI interim provost and executive vice chancellor, said, “Congratulations to Professor Druffel on this outstanding achievement of being elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Her contributions to the Earth system science field exemplify the academic excellence of UCI faculty on a global scale.”

To date, there are 2,403 active NAS members across the globe, and 24 of them – including Druffel – are from UCI.

About the University of California, Irvine: Founded in 1965, UCI is the youngest member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. The campus has produced three Nobel laureates and is known for its academic achievement, premier research, innovation and anteater mascot. Led by Chancellor Howard Gillman, UCI has more than 36,000 students and offers 222 degree programs. It’s located in one of the world’s safest and most economically vibrant communities and is Orange County’s second-largest employer, contributing $5 billion annually to the local economy. For more on UCI, visit www.uci.edu.

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