Carol Stein – 2023 Professional Excellence Award Winner For Academia/Research

Carol Stein is Professor Emerita in the Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences of the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC). She began her career as an undergraduate at Caltech in 1974 and then a graduate student at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University. After a short post-doctoral at Northwestern University, she served on the faculty at UIC for 38 years and retired at the end of summer 2023.

Her research covers a range of topics in plate tectonics dealing with the thermal and mechanical evolution of the lithosphere. They include reference models for the average thermal evolution of oceanic lithosphere, oceanic mid-plate swells and hotspot regions, hydrothermal circulation in oceanic lithosphere, and the rifting of oceanic and continental lithosphere. Her current work involves studying how continents rift apart to form passive margins bounding new ocean basins, notably by examining the failed ~1.1-billion-year-old Midcontinent Rift in North America, which is 3000 km long with two main "arms" meeting in the Lake Superior region.

Early in her career, there were relatively few female students and even fewer women faculty in the Earth Sciences. She has enjoyed helping women in her undergraduate classes, graduate students, and other young scientists develop their skills. She is pleased to be involved with AWG’s role as a leader in helping women succeed.