Aramco Americas geologist enhances participation of women in geoscience workforce

Houston, August 10, 2023

The Association for Women Geoscientists (AWG) has recognized Aramco Americas’ Gretchen Gillis with its 2023 AWG Professional Excellence Award in the Industry/Consulting category. The AWG is an international organization devoted to enhancing the quality and level of participation of women in geosciences.

Gretchen Gillis interacts with attendees during the IMAGE 22 conference in Houston. Members of the AWG Professional Excellence Awards Committee recognized Gillis for her exceptional support of her fellow geoscientists, including introducing girls and young women to geoscience careers.

Gretchen Gillis examines rock samples from Utah’s unique Green River Formation known for fish fossils during a 2018 field trip prior to an American Association of Petroleum Geologists conference.

Gillis was selected for her distinguished contributions throughout her career. She supports exploration and production operations of Saudi Aramco with her colleagues in the Upstream Technical Support Division within Aramco Americas Research & Development. Along the way, Gillis has served for more than a decade on three industry boards.

“Thank you for being such a positive role model to current and future generations of women geoscientists,” said Debra Hanneman, President, AWG. Members of the AWG Professional Excellence Awards Committee recognized Gillis for her exceptional support of her fellow geoscientists, including introducing girls and
young women to geoscience careers.

She will be presented with the award at the AWG awards breakfast in October in conjunction with the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Gretchen, who was called “someone you really ought to know!” in 2022 by ALLY Energy when she received their GRIT award for high-achieving women in the energy industry, has made it her life’s mission to excel at both her work in energy geoscience and in advancing women and others underrepresented in the field by mentoring students and young professionals.

Gretchen’s dedication to a better future for geoscientists led her to propose a new strategic direction as President of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. She is currently Oversight Committee Chair for the International Meeting for Applied Geoscience & Energy (IMAGE), the combined geoscience event created by AAPG and the Society of Exploration Geophysicists during her presidency.

She truly shines when presented with the opportunity to speak to young professionals and students. Most recently Gillis gave the commencement speech at The University of Texas at Austin’s Jackson School of Geosciences, encouraging students “to be grateful for the world-class education and experiences you have enjoyed and to find ways to give back no matter where you find yourself in the years ahead.”

In a keynote during the second annual Girls Build Solutions Showcase in Atlanta, Georgia, hosted by the Million Girls Moonshot’s STEM Next Opportunity Fund, she shared insights from her career in science with 350 students, teachers, and mentors with the aim to engage more girls in STEM learning opportunities through afterschool and summer programs.

Gillis will be receiving a $500 monetary prize with her AWG Professional Excellence Award. What will she be doing with the money? “I plan to donate the prize to the AWG Foundation to support the scholarship named for an important mentor, Maria Luisa ‘WeeCha’ Crawford, Bryn Mawr College Professor Emerita of Geology.”

No surprise coming from a person who has followed her passion and made it her mission to make a difference.

AWG has over 1,000 members, including men, in 48 states as well as several foreign countries.