

symposium

BRINGS IN PIONEERING RESEARCHER

The 2009 McMaster School Symposium welcomes forest canopy researcher Dr. Margaret Lowman

Internationally recognized for her pioneering research in forest canopy ecology, Dr. Margaret Lowman will provide the opening keynote for the 2009 McMaster Symposium on April 2. The theme for the McMaster Symposium is “Humanity at the Crossroads: Challenges to Sustainable Community Development,” and runs April 2 – 4 on the campus of Defiance College.

Lowman pioneered the science of canopy ecology. For 30 years, she has designed hot-air balloons and walkways for treetop exploration to solve mysteries in the world’s forests, with special expertise on the links between insect pests and ecosystem health. Affectionately called the grandmother of canopy research, she has explored all three major rain forests of the world - Africa, Australia/Asia, and the Neotropics (including the Amazon).

Lowman facilitates policy solutions using science education as a tool, drawing upon a lifetime of research and conservation. Her international network and passion for science have led her into leadership roles where she seeks best practices to solve environmental challenges. She is currently director of Environmental Initiatives and Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies at New College of Florida and serves as vice president of The Explorers Club; vice president of the Ecological Society of America; treasurer of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation; executive director of Florida’s TREE Foundation; and cluster chair for the Sarasota Economic Development Corporation.

An author of over 100 peer-reviewed scientific publications, her first book, *Life in the Treetops*, received a cover review in the New York Times Sunday Book Review. *Life in the Treetops* describes Lowman’s scientific studies in forest canopies around the world and her challenges as a field biologist, wife,



Dr. Margaret Lowman is the 2009 McMaster School Symposium keynote speaker.

and single parent.

Her second book, *It’s a Jungle Up There: More Tales from the Treetops*, is an upbeat portrayal of how a parent’s career can imprint children, and how children in turn can influence the success and trajectory of their parent’s career. Reflecting her love for linking kids to nature, Lowman’s personal mantra is no child left indoors. Named after Lowman’s mantra, on September 18, 2008, Congress passed important “No Child Left Inside” legislation that will fund environmental education programs at a national level. It encourages students, families, and adults to experience nature and that teaching children about their “home,” planet earth, fosters better stewardship and science literacy.

Working tirelessly on sustainability

initiatives at home and abroad, she recently received the Lifetime Achievement Award for Conservation from Sarasota County. Her numerous awards also include the Margaret Douglas Medal for Excellence in Conservation Education from the Garden Club of America; Girls Inc. Visionary Award; Mendel Medal for achievements in science and spirit; Lowell Thomas Medal for discoveries in the canopy; and election as a Kilby laureate and an Aldo Leopold Leadership Fellow.

In addition to her keynote address at the McMaster Symposium, Lowman will attend some of the faculty and student presentations occurring during the three-day event. ◆