

SCIENCE IS FOR GIRLS

Celebrating the next generation of geoscience pioneers.

“I grew up in my father’s laboratory and played beneath the chemical benches until I was tall enough to play on them.”

That’s Hope Jahren, writing in her best-selling memoir, *Lab Girl*, about when she fell in love with science as a girl, a love she’s nurtured into a career as one of the world’s top geoscientists. Dr. Jahren is an expert in the chemical makeup of plants and trees. Her research has shown how forests have shaped the Earth’s atmosphere and environment from 100 million years ago to now.

To Dr. Jahren, science is about more than creating new medicines or cars. What’s the real purpose of science? “It’s to feed the soul in the same way that art does,” Dr. Jahren says. “The more you know about the world, the more you feel like you’re part of it. That’s the purpose of teaching it to children and to girls.”

Dr. Jahren is an Ambassador for IF/THEN, an initiative of Lyda Hill Philanthropies. The goal of IF/THEN (www.ifthenshecan.org) is to create a culture shift in our society so that women innovators in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are empowered to tackle our greatest global challenges and will inspire the next generation of STEM pioneers. IF/THEN is highlighting 100 of the top women in STEM careers, and giving them the opportunity to share their stories and serve as high-profile role models for middle school girls.

In this special mini issue of *Nautilus*, you will meet Dr. Jahren through a lively interview about her life and career in science. Dr. Jahren shares her insights into being a woman in what has been a man’s world. Her discussion of her work provides an exciting jumping-off point for educators and students to further explore the geosciences, the infinite interactions of natural systems and processes that make up the geosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere.

This issue also celebrates the theme of Earth Science Week 2019, “Geoscience Is for Everyone.” Lyda Hill Philanthropies, *Nautilus*, and the American Geosciences Institute (AGI) are working in collaboration through Earth Science Week 2019 (October 9–13) to advance the vision of the IF/THEN Initiative. Be sure and turn to “Classroom Connections” on pages 14 and 15, which link Dr. Jahren’s work to related activities for students and teachers. Additional IF/THEN Ambassador profiles and educational guidance will be featured on AGI’s Earth Science Week website (www.earthsciweek.org) during and after the 2019 celebration. IF/THEN will continue to offer profiles of trailblazing women geoscientists and ways to strengthen STEM instruction, align investigations with the Next Generation Science Standards, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. This project is funded by IF/THEN, an initiative of Lyda Hill Philanthropies (<https://lydahillphilanthropies.org/>).

Everyone can take heart in Dr. Jahren’s story. “As a female scientist I am still unusual,” Dr. Jahren writes. “But in my heart I was never anything else.”

—Kevin Berger
Nautilus Editor

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