

AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Geographical Society Awards The David Livingstone Centenary Medal to Dr. Susanna Hecht.

Description: *The American Geographical Society (AGS) awarded Dr. Susanna Hecht, Professor of Urban Planning at UCLA, The David Livingstone Centenary Medal on November 16, 2018 during the Society's Annual Fall Symposium held at Columbia University. The Livingstone Medal is awarded for exceptional work on the Southern hemisphere.*

[New York City, NY] — [December 20, 2018] – The American Geographical Society (AGS) announced that Dr. Hecht, Professor of Urban Planning at UCLA, was presented with the David Livingstone Centenary Medal at a ceremony held on November 16th during the AGS Annual Fall Symposium at Columbia University.

The David Livingstone Centenary Medal was established at the initiative of the Hispanic Society of America in March 1913, on the 100th anniversary of the birth of the great African traveler, David Livingstone. Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor of Mt. Rushmore, designed the medal. It is awarded by AGS “for scientific achievement in the field of geography of the southern hemisphere.” Previous recipients include Theodore Roosevelt, Isaiah Bowman, and Bertha Becker.

Dr. Hecht is widely recognized as a preeminent authority on forest transitions and sustainable agriculture. She has worked in Latin America for almost 30 years, focusing on land use change in the tropics, specifically in the Amazon rainforest. She is one of the founding thinkers of the field of Political Ecology, which integrates humanities, policy, and social justice in its approach to issues. She has a deeply sophisticated comprehension of deforestation—how it interacts with migration, the ecosystem, and the possibilities for alternative economies. Her studies of responses to deforestation have led her to explore the possibilities for non-timber forest products and how they might connect with new institutions, traditional peoples, gender relations, and social movements.

Dr. Hecht's books include: *The Fate of the Forest: Destroyers, Developers and Defenders of the Amazon* (1989) and *The Scramble for the Amazon and the Lost Paradise of Euclides da Cunha* (2013), and she coedited *The Social Life of Forests: The Past, Present, and Futures of Woodland Resurgence* (2014). *The Scramble for the Amazon* won the American Historical Association's Best Book in Environmental History Award in 2015, and *The Fate of the Forest* was named one of the most influential books in cultural geography by the American Association of Geography.

Dr. Susanna B. Hecht is an American geographer and professor of Urban Planning in the Luskin School of Public Affairs, Institute of the Environment, and Department of Geography at the University of California Los Angeles. She is also a professor of International History at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Chicago and her Ph.D. in Geography from the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Deborah Popper, AGS Vice President and Chair of the Honors & Exploration Committee noted: “Susanna's work on the Amazon exemplifies geography's contributions to changing tropical conditions. She understands how economics, culture, and land use operate in a society to reflect and change the environment. On top of that, Susanna has a gift for sharing her findings with a wide audience.”

The American Geographical Society (AGS) is a 21st-century learning society dedicated to the advancement of geographic thinking, knowledge, and understanding across business, government, academe, social sectors, and most importantly with teachers and students. Established in 1851, AGS is the oldest professional geographical organization in the United States. It is recognized worldwide as a pioneer in geographical research and education for over 166 years. The mission of AGS is to advance and promote geography in business, government, science, and education. Our goal is to enhance the nation's geographic literacy so as to engender sound public policy, national security, and human well-being worldwide. AGS seeks to engage the American public, from its youngest to its oldest citizens, with new and amazing ways to understand and characterize our changing world. The Society maintains its headquarters in New York City.



Dr. Susanna Hecht

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