

Monday, February 10, 2020

Live Oak Room • Norris Conference Center • 816 Town and Country Blvd #210
Social Hour 5:30–6:30 p.m.
Dinner 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$40 Preregistered members; \$45 non-members/walk-ups

To guarantee a seat, pre-register on the HGS website & pre-pay by credit card.

Pre-registration without payment will not be accepted.

Walk-ups may pay at the door if extra seats are available.

If you are an Active or Associate Member who is unemployed and would like to attend this meeting, please call the HGS office for a discounted registration cost. We are also seeking members to volunteer at the registration desk for this and other events.

HGS Scholarship Night Dinner Meeting

HGS Scholarship Night

Taking the HGS Scholarship Night to Greater Heights with Astronaut Jessica Watkins!

By Charles A. Sternbach and Jeff W. Lund



The HGS Scholarship Night committee is excited to announce that we will have the pleasure of having Dr. Jessica Watkins, NASA astronaut and geoscientist, as our speaker for the 2020 HGS Scholarship Night planned for Feb 10, 2020! The event will be held at the Norris Conference Center, in City Centre starting at 5:30 PM. We anticipate a full house. Reservations can be made on the HGS.org webpage

link. <https://www.hgs.org/civicrm/event/info?id=2120>

In recent years, our annual Scholarship Night has become a premier event for the HGS. This is a night where we take the time to honor outstanding students with promising futures. This year the HGS Scholarship Night committee asked; who can inform, uplift, and inspire the next generation scholarship winners? Our answer: Jessica Watkins. It is a time-honored tradition of the HGS to recognize astronauts who are also geoscientists and Jessica is among the next generation of astronaut leaders who will one day return to the moon or even walk on Mars.

Jessica Watkins has been selected by NASA to join the 2017 Astronaut Candidate Class. She reported for duty in August 2017. The Colorado native earned a Bachelor's degree in Geological and Environmental Sciences at Stanford University, and a Doctorate in Geology from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Watkins has worked at NASA's Ames Research Center and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and was a collaborator on the Mars Science Laboratory rover, Curiosity.

Watkins was born in Gaithersburg, Maryland, but considers Lafayette, Colorado her hometown. Her parents, Michael and Carolyn Watkins, still live there. In college, she was a member of Stanford Women's Rugby as well as the USA Rugby Women's Sevens National Team. During her postdoc, she served as a volunteer assistant coach for the Caltech Women's Basketball team. She also enjoys soccer, rock climbing, skiing and creative writing. She graduated from Fairview High School in Boulder, Colorado. Earned a Bachelor's degree in Geological and Environmental Sciences from Stanford University in Stanford, California. Earned a Doctorate in Geology from the University of California, Los Angeles.

For her PhD research, Watkins studied the emplacement mechanisms of large landslides on Mars and Earth through orbital data analysis and field work. While at UCLA, she was a teaching assistant for various courses in earth and planetary science. At the time of her selection in June 2017, Watkins was a postdoctoral fellow in the Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences at the California Institute of Technology, where she collaborated on the Mars Science Laboratory rover, Curiosity, participating in daily planning of rover activities and investigating the geologic history of Gale Crater, Mars.

During undergraduate internships at NASA's Ames Research Center, Watkins conducted research supporting the Phoenix Mars Lander mission and prototype Mars drill testing. She also served as chief geologist for NASA Spaceward Bound Crew 86 at the Mars Desert Research Station in 2009. As a graduate student, Watkins participated in several internships at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), including analysis of near-earth asteroids discovered by the NEOWISE mission in 2011, tactical and strategic planning for the Curiosity mission in 2013, and system design testing for the upcoming Mars 2020 and Mars Sample Return missions the following year. In addition, she served as a science operations team member for a Desert Research and Technology Studies (Desert RATS) analog mission at NASA's Johnson Space Center in 2011 and participated in the NASA Planetary Science Summer School at JPL in 2016. Watkins reported for duty in August 2017 to begin two years of training as an Astronaut Candidate. Upon completion, she will be assigned technical duties in the Astronaut Office while she awaits a flight assignment.

Jeff Lund, our Calvert Memorial Scholarship Fund Chairman reports that the Warren L. and Florence W. Calvert Memorial Scholarship came from a generous donation from former HGS member Warren Calvert in the late 1970's. Thanks to the generosity of HGS Members and various corporate sponsors we have been able to continue supporting promising future geoscientists in their studies. The Calvert Memorial Fund Scholarships are given to graduate students studying geosciences. The Calvert Memorial Scholarship Fund program consists of a passionate, five-person Board of HGS Members, listed below, dedicated to supporting students and the future of the geoscience field.

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In 2019, the Board awarded scholarships to fifteen individual geoscience graduate students, twelve of whom were first time recipients. The awardees included four PhD candidates and eleven M.S. candidates from eight universities. In 2019, we were fortunate enough to not only give more scholarships to students as well as largest monetary amounts in the history of the program. The Calvert Board is very excited to have Astronaut Jessica Watkins as our 2020 Scholarship Night speaker. We believe she is an outstanding member of the geoscience profession and a tremendous role model for all of the students.

Evelyn Medvin, our Foundation Chair, reports that the HGS Foundation Fund will award scholarships to top undergraduate geoscience students from 7 Texas Universities. Because of the generosity of our sponsor companies, we are able to provide \$3500 scholarships to 6 of the students and \$4500 to our Mabe Scholar, the top scholar of the group. Please come and meet your future employee!

The HGS scholarship Night committee would like to recognize John Tubb for his past chairmanship of this committee. John's vision built a solid foundation upon which the committee continues to reach for greater heights. ■