

# Margaret D. Lowman, Ph.D.



## Contact Information

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Chair of Botany and Senior Scientist in  
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## Biography, Education, and Research Interests

Nicknamed the “[real-life Lorax](#)” by National Geographic and “[Einstein of the treetops](#)” by Wall Street Journal, Meg Lowman pioneered the science of canopy ecology. For over 30 years, she has designed hot-air balloons and walkways for treetop exploration to solve mysteries in the world’s forests, especially insect pests and ecosystem health. Meg is affectionately called the mother of canopy research as one of the first scientists to explore this eighth continent. She relentlessly works to map the canopy for biodiversity and to champion forest conservation around the world, gaining her start in the rain forests of Australia. Her international network and passion for science have led her into leadership roles where she seeks best practices to solve environmental challenges and serves as a role model to women and minorities in science.

Formerly a Professor at North Carolina State University and the founding director of North Carolina’s innovative Nature Research Center at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, Meg oversaw the creation, construction, staffing, and programming of this research wing in partnership with the NC University system. She was subsequently hired by the California Academy of Sciences to lead their twenty-first century strategy of integrating research with sustainability initiatives both local and global. As the Academy’s inaugural Chief of Science and Sustainability, she re-organized internal operations to prioritize relevant science, sustainability, collections and efficient financial practices. Now she has taken on an external role as the Academy’s new Director of Global Initiatives and Senior Scientist for Plant Conservation, to strategize and promote the Academy’s mission for sustainability science, and to disseminate her team’s accomplishments to groups ranging from elementary classes to corporate executives to international conferences. Lowman’s past leadership has included Vice President of the [Ecological Society of America](#); Treasurer of the [Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation](#); founder of the [TREE Foundation](#); Board of Directors for The Explorers Club and Earthwatch; and Climate Change Adviser to Alex Sink, former CFO of the

Florida cabinet. Previously, she served as Professor and Director of Environmental Initiatives at New College of Florida, CEO of The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, and Professor of Biology & Environmental Studies at Williams College.

Lowman's academic training includes Williams College (BA, Biology); Aberdeen University (MSc, Ecology); Sydney University (PhD, Botany); and Tuck School of Business (Diploma of Executive Management). Her numerous awards include the Margaret Douglas Medal for Excellence in Conservation Education from the Garden Club of America, Girls Inc. Visionary Award, the Mendel Medal for achievements in science and spirit, the Lowell Thomas Medal for canopy exploration, Kilby Laureate and Aldo Leopold Leadership Fellow. She has authored more than 125 peer-reviewed scientific publications, and her first book, "Life in the Treetops," received a cover review in the New York Times Sunday Book Review. Working tirelessly on sustainability initiatives at home and abroad, "CanopyMeg" was a Fulbright Senior Specialist Scholar to both India and Ethiopia; and National Geographic and National Science Foundation fund her conservation work on Ethiopian church forests. She is the proud mother of sons Edward and James, both science majors from Princeton University.