

# Susan K. Avery, PhD



Susan K. Avery, PhD (Photo by Tom Kleindinst, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution)

## **Biography, Education, and Research Interests**

Susan K. Avery took office as president and director of WHOI on February 4, 2008. Avery is the ninth director in the institution's 78-year history, and the first woman to hold the position.

As an oceanographic leader with a background in atmospheric research, Avery has used her unique position to underscore the importance of ocean-atmosphere interactions in understanding whole Earth systems. Since taking the helm at WHOI, Avery has delivered Congressional testimony and presentations at scientific conferences such as the American Meteorological Society, the IEEE International Geoscience & Remote Sensing Symposium, the American Geological Union, and the Partnership for Observation of the Global Ocean (POGO), often directing her comments at the intersection of atmospheric, earth, and ocean science.

Avery has extensive experience as a leader within scientific institutions. She came to WHOI from the University of Colorado at Boulder (UCB), where she was a member of the faculty since 1982, and where she served in interim positions as vice chancellor for research and dean of the graduate school, as well as provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs. From 1994-2004, she served as director of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES), the first woman

and first engineer to hold that position. There, she facilitated new interdisciplinary research efforts spanning the geosciences while bringing them together with social and biological sciences and helped establish a thriving K-12 outreach program and a Center for Science and Technology Policy Research.

Avery's research includes studies of atmospheric circulation and precipitation, climate variability and water resources, and the development of new radar techniques and instruments for remote sensing. The author or co-author of more than 80 peer-reviewed articles, Avery helped form an integrated science and assessment program that examines the impacts of climate variability on water in the American West. She also worked with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Climate Change Science Program to help formulate a national strategic science plan for climate research.

Avery is a fellow of both the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and of the American Meteorological Society, for which she also served as president. She is a member of the advisory board for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and a past chair of the board of trustees of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research. She has also served on numerous advisory panels, committees, and councils for the National Science Foundation, the National Research Council, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

Avery earned a bachelor's degree in physics from Michigan State University in 1972, a master's in physics from the University of Illinois in 1974, and a doctorate in atmospheric science from the University of Illinois in 1978.