

PREFACE

I am proud to have the honour to handle this issue of *Geochemical Perspectives* (GP) by Marilyn Fogel. She is the first female scientist writing a GP series, and I am happy that I managed to convince her to do so.

I am one of the lucky scientists who was 'adopted' into Marilyn's 'science family' where you are assured support and backing in all scientific and life situations. Marilyn is not just an excellent mentor, but an outstanding role model. She taught me much of what I know about organic geochemistry and astrobiology, as well as what makes a good colleague or mentor to the younger generation. She taught me to always endeavour to do the best science regardless of consequences and to ignore the still strong gender bias in science. She gave me the confidence to stand up for myself and defend my science. That advice in a large part helped me to become the person I am today. Her path as described in this GP issue is a fantastic example of how following your curiosity will keep you content. Best advice ever.

I just want to share a typical Marilyn (Queen Thora) adventure story. In 2010, while in Svalbard on one of our many field excursions linked to the AMASE / ASTEP project, we needed someone to be on 'polar bear watch' while we sampled snow and ice algae on Midtre Lovebreen. Marilyn volunteered with no hesitation and accompanied us the whole day with the rifle on our glacier sampling endeavours; naturally she was more than a polar bear guard, and in her understated fashion helped us better define our scientific questions. With her astute observations, she focussed our sampling and analysis plans.





Three generations of female scientists during a sampling trip to Midtre Lovebreen, Svalbard, Norway in 2010. From left to right: Verena Starke, Liane G. Benning, Marilyn Fogel and Dominique J. Tobler. Photo credit: Liane G. Benning.

Soon after our last trip to Svalbard in 2015, Marilyn was diagnosed with ALS. No words describe the feelings that the ALS news brought up in me adequately so best not to start, but I urge everyone to read this GP issue, to follow Marilyn's "IsotopeQueen" blog (<https://isotopequeen.blogspot.com/>), and to watch a video that her son Evan Swarth made about Marilyn – the scientist and her ALS – available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRhpFoUFMyA&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR11UivstUF8dkB53KdhPhsf2RUHXXpLotCQqVED8LVY9sT6vVQbAvSr1u8>.

Thank you, Marilyn, for being you.

Liane G. Benning

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