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UC San Diego (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/>)
SALLY RIDE SCIENCE

SRS cofounder Tam O'Shaughnessy to receive humanitarian award at Billie Jean King & Friends Gala



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Tam O'Shaughnessy, cofounder and executive director of [Sally Ride Science at UC San Diego](http://www.sallyridescience.com) (<http://www.sallyridescience.com>), is being honored with the 2017 Joe Shapiro Humanitarian Award for her advocacy of science literacy and diversity in science education.

O'Shaughnessy will receive the award October 21 at Cal State Los Angeles' [Billie Jean King & Friends Gala](http://www.calstatela.edu/bjk20) (<http://www.calstatela.edu/bjk20>) in recognition of her work to inspire girls and boys of all backgrounds in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

"I am extremely proud to receive this honor and to be included among the distinguished past recipients," O'Shaughnessy said. "I will continue to do my part to carry on this important work."

O'Shaughnessy and her life partner, Sally Ride, America's first woman in space, joined with three friends in 2001 to found Sally Ride Science. As the San Diego-based company's chief creative officer, O'Shaughnessy oversaw innovative programs and publications that reached millions of students. Sally Ride Science became part of UC San Diego in 2015, with O'Shaughnessy as executive director.

The Joe Shapiro Humanitarian award recognizes a person whose work and community service have had a positive and lasting impact. The award is given in memory of Shapiro, a former executive vice president at Walt Disney Co. who taught at Cal State LA. Shapiro, husband of tennis champion Pam Shriver, died in 1999.

Past award recipients have included Ride; former California First Lady Maria Shriver; tennis great Chris Evert; Olympian Jackie Joyner-Kersey; sportswriter Frank Deford; and physicist and philanthropist Frances Hellman.

The annual Billie Jean King & Friends Gala raises money to fund scholarships for student-athletes at Cal State LA. Billie Jean King, famed as both a tennis champion and a social justice advocate, attended Cal State LA and won her first Wimbledon title while she was on the school's tennis team. As in past years, the gala will be held at Langham Huntington Hotel in Pasadena.

O'Shaughnessy grew up in Southern California and played professional tennis from 1971 to 1974. As a teenager, she was coached by King, who remained a mentor and friend to O'Shaughnessy through the years.

O'Shaughnessy received B.S. and M.S. degrees in biology from Georgia State University. While teaching high school biology, she became interested in how children learn. She earned her PhD in school psychology from UC Riverside and became a professor in that field at San Diego State University.

As a scientist and educator, O'Shaughnessy grew increasingly concerned about the low level of science literacy among young people, and the underrepresentation of women in science and technical professions. Her concerns led her to join in founding Sally Ride Science. In addition to chief creative officer, she served as the company's


chief operating officer, and after Ride's death in 2012, as chair of the Board of Directors and later chief executive officer.


When Sally Ride Science joined UC San Diego in 2015, the company became a nonprofit entity. Its innovative STEM programs are coordinated by [UC San Diego Extension \(https://extension.ucsd.edu/\)](https://extension.ucsd.edu/), [Scripps Institution of Oceanography \(https://scripps.ucsd.edu/\)](https://scripps.ucsd.edu/) and the [San Diego Supercomputer Center \(http://www.sdsc.edu/\)](http://www.sdsc.edu/).

O'Shaughnessy has written 13 children's books, including six with Ride. The two won the American Institute of Physics Children's Science Writing Award in 1995 for *The Third Planet*. In 2015 O'Shaughnessy published *Sally Ride: A Photobiography of America's Pioneering Woman in Space*. It was nominated for the Kirkus Prize for Young Readers' Literature.

O'Shaughnessy also serves on the Cal State Los Angeles President's Council and the Advisory Board of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum.

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