UMass Dartmouth's Mckenzie Ferrari Named 2023 ITA Sally Ride STEM Award Winner

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From Intercollegiate Tennis Association, June 27, 2023

The Intercollegiate Tennis Association (https://www.wearecollegetennis.com/) (ITA) is excited to announce that Mckenzie Ferrari from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth has been named the recipient of the 2023 ITA Sally Ride STEM Award as endowed by Tam O'Shaughnessy.

"What an amazing confluence of great stories and astonishing people – Sally Ride, Tam O'Shaughnessy and Mckenzie Ferrari," said ITA Chief Executive Officer Timothy Russell. "College tennis couples the best in athletics and higher education, and Mckenize represents the best and brightest of our sport. Tam's vision and generosity in celebrating the life of Sally Ride is an inspiration. Sally's legacy lives on in supporting the next generation of American leaders."

The three-year player and two-year captain of the Corsairs will be honored with a postgraduate scholarship of $8,000 and special recognition during the ITA Leadership Awards Weekend later this summer. Additionally, a $2,000 donation will be made to the UMass Dartmouth women's tennis team in her honor.

"Being recognized as this year's award winner is certainly an honor," proclaimed Ferrari. "Tennis and physics have been instrumental in my life, much like how they were for Sally Ride. I am grateful and humbled to be able to follow in her footsteps, using my passion for both athletics and STEM to inspire others throughout the future."

Ferrari has always had an interest in science, and it was tennis that truly sparked her interest in the study of physics. Tennis was the perfect demonstration of how the understanding of physics improves a player's game; for example, it is vital for adjusting to various court surfaces and understanding the spin of an opponent's return.

Merging these two interests together at UMass Dartmouth, Ferrari blossomed into a leader on the court while advancing her studies off the court by studying the fundamental laws and theories that govern not just the tennis court but also the universe.

Ferrari's research experience lies in the fields of stellar and transient astrophysics, illuminating the properties of the celestial objects we use as cosmic distance indicators. This included research at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, working on a project to measure the temperatures of some of the hottest stars in the universe.

"We are so proud of Mckenzie, and all of her achievements in the classroom, on the tennis courts, and often behind the scenes," stated UMass Dartmouth head women's tennis coach Douglas Chapman. "She was instrumental in getting our tennis program reinstated, and not missing a beat as a two-year captain. She has been a great ambassador for our team and the university. Mckenzie is a brilliant student who has an amazing future ahead of her. "

Ferrari majored in physics with a concentration in astronomy and astrophysics while attending UMass Dartmouth. This fall she will attend the University of Chicago, where she will pursue a PhD in Astrophysics.

“My participation in collegiate tennis has inspired me to pursue graduate school,” noted Ferrari. “My goal is to become a professor, where I can pass on my love of science and athletics to the next generation. This award in Sally’s honor motivates that dream, and I am thrilled to have been named the recipient.”

Ferrari becomes just the second recipient of the ITA Sally Ride STEM Award, joining the inaugural recipient, Anna Tifrea (California Institute of Technology), as a winner of this prestigious award.

”I am elated that Mckenzie Ferrari is being honored with the 2023 ITA Sally Ride STEM Award,” said O’Shaughnessy (who was Ride’s life partner and is cofounder of Sally Ride Science). “Sally and Mckenzie share many interests and qualities. Sally would be thrilled to know that Mckenzie – who loves tennis and physics just as she did – will be supported in her dream of studying astrophysics and becoming a university professor –a lso just like Sally did after her pioneering career at NASA!”

The ITA Sally Ride STEM Award as endowed by O’Shaughnessy was created to honor a female student-athlete who demonstrates zeal, dedication, and perseverance toward her tennis training and competition, STEM studies, and long-term goals. The award money given to the student-athlete may be used in any way she wishes.

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Four Finalists Announced for 2023 Intercollegiate Tennis Association Sally Ride STEM Award (https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/four-finalists-announced-for-2023-intercollegiate-tennis-association-sally-ride-stem-award/)

Finalists announced for 2024 ITA Sally Ride STEM Award (https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/finalists-announced-for-2024-ita-sally-ride-stem-award/)

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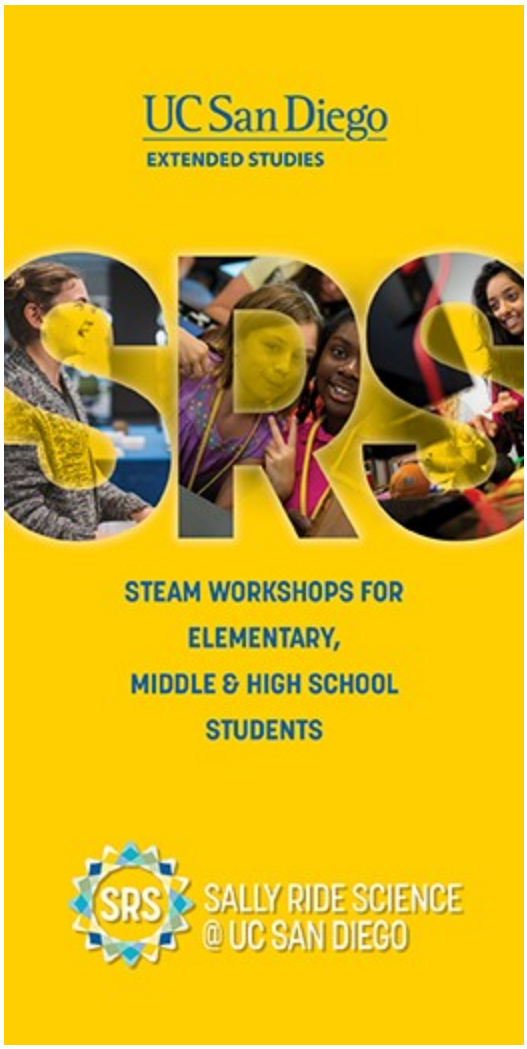

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