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SALLY RIDE SCIENCE

Case Western Reserve's Hannah Kassaie named 2024 ITA Sally Ride STEM Award winner



(<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Hannah-Kassie.jpg>)

May 30, 2024 (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/case-western-reserves-hannah-kassaie-named-2024-ita-sally-ride-stem-award-winner/>) by Sally Ride Science (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/author/mking/>) · Posted in " News Releases (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/category/news-releases/>) " · Tags " ITA (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/tag/ita/>), Women's Tennis (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/tag/womens-tennis/>) " ·

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Tempe, Ariz. – The [Intercollegiate Tennis Association](https://wearecollegetennis.com/) (ITA) is pleased to announce the selection of Hannah Kassaie of [Case Western Reserve University](https://case.edu/) (CWRU) as the 2024 [ITA Sally Ride STEM Award](https://tinyurl.com/bss9hujj) recipient.

The award was endowed by Tam O’Shaughnessy, Sally Ride’s life partner and co-founder of Sally Ride Science, to assist a female college tennis player who plans to pursue graduate studies in a STEM field. Ride played tennis at Stanford, where she earned her doctorate in physics before joining NASA and becoming the first American woman in space.

“The mission of our association is to serve college tennis and return leaders of tomorrow,” said ITA CEO Dr. Timothy Russell. “Our sport, which is ultimately about higher education, develops championship human beings on and off the court. Hannah Kassaie is an exemplar of what is great about college tennis. She follows in the footsteps of two wonderful Americans, Sally Ride and Tam O’Shaughnessy. I am confident that Hannah will do astonishing things with her life and for her community moving forward.”

Kassaie, who plans to attend medical school, is a soon-to-be six-time ITA All-American for the Spartans. She will be honored with a postgraduate scholarship of \$8,000 and special recognition during the ITA Leadership Awards Weekend this summer. Additionally, a \$2,000 donation will be made to the Case Western Reserve women’s tennis team in her honor.

“I’m beyond grateful to receive this award, one named after such an accomplished and inspiring woman, scientist and former athlete,” noted Kassaie. “I can’t thank Dr. O’Shaughnessy and the Intercollegiate Tennis Association enough. Dr. Ride’s accomplishments, and her confidence, are incredible despite the barriers she faced throughout her life.”

Having played tennis since the age of four, Kassaie has always found the sport to be a valuable way to connect with others and an avenue to learn important life lessons that can translate to any sector of her life. In particular, She credits tennis for teaching her to be patient and to trust the process, which she describes as two key skills that translate to her studies to become a physician.



Hannah Kassaie

Presented with numerous athletic opportunities coming out of high school, Kassaie decided to enroll at Case Western Reserve to fulfill her academic aspirations first and foremost at one of the top universities in the country. Here, Kassaie was able to flourish not only academically, but athletically as well, becoming one of the most storied players in Spartan women's tennis history.

Throughout her career, she has reached the quarterfinals of both the NCAA Singles and Doubles Championships, has been ranked within the Top 10 of the ITA Singles and Doubles Rankings, and has been named the NCAA Division III Women's Tennis Elite 90 recipient, an honor given annually to the individual who has reached the pinnacle of competition at the national championship level in his or her sport while also achieving the highest academic standard among his or her peers.

"Hannah is so deserving of all of her success," said Case Western Reserve's head women's tennis coach, Kirsten Gambrell McMahon. "She goes above and beyond each day to give her very best to continue to improve both as a person and as a student-athlete. Year over year, she manages to have an even better season and achieve even more on the court. I'm truly so proud of her."

Kassaie is currently finishing her undergraduate degree, majoring in nutrition and minoring in natural sciences and chemistry. She has been accepted into the Pre-Professional Scholars Program at Case Western Reserve, where she will attend the School of Medicine beginning in July 2025.

Meanwhile, over the next year, Kassaie is set to conduct genetics research at the Center of Excellence for Medical Genomics in Bangkok, Thailand, where she hopes not only to put her STEM studies into action but to continue to teach tennis to others in her free time.

"To be named the winner of this award is truly an honor, and I'm so happy that our team will also be recognized, as they've been such an important part of my college experience," said Kassaie. "With passions for tennis and STEM, I hope to have the same impact on others as what Dr. Ride has had for me."

Kassaie now becomes just the third recipient of the ITA Sally Ride STEM Award, joining the prestigious list of winners, which includes McKenzie Ferrari (University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, 2023) and Anna Tifrea (California Institute of Technology, 2022).

"I am beyond happy that Hannah Kassaie is the Winner of the 2024 ITA Sally Ride STEM Award," said O'Shaughnessy. "Hannah exemplifies everything this award is about – a female student-athlete who has passion and purpose in pursuit of her goals. Sally would love that Hannah, who loves tennis and science just like she did, will be supported in her dreams."

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 towards her tennis training and competition, STEM studies and long-term goals.

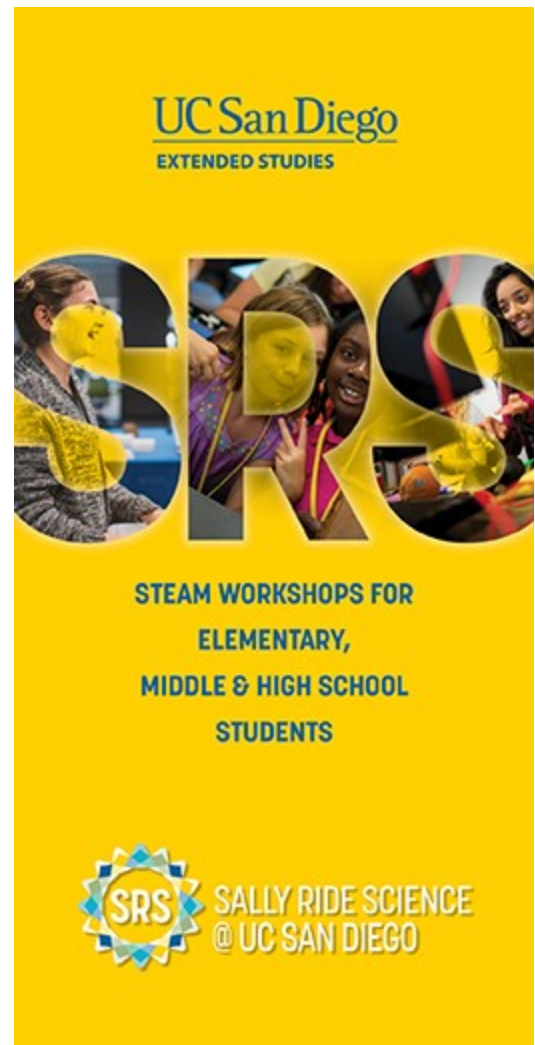
Go to the [ITA website \(https://tinyurl.com/bss9hujj\)](https://tinyurl.com/bss9hujj) to learn more.

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🔗 'I am Sally Ride' is next title in inspiring children's book series written by Brad Meltzer and illustrated by Christopher Eliopoulos (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/i-am-sally-ride-is-next-title-in-brad-meltzers-series-of-inspiring-childrens-books/>)

SALLY, award-winning documentary from National Geographic, premieres at Sundance Film Festival (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/national-geographic-documentary-sally-to-premiere-at-sundance-film-festival/>) 🔗

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