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SALLY RIDE SCIENCE

MIT Standout Jessica Lu Named Recipient of 2025 ITA Sally Ride STEM Award



(<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Jessica-Lu-forehand-volley-copy.jpg>)

June 24, 2025 (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/mit-standout-jessica-lu-named-recipient-of-2025-ita-sally-ride-stem-award/>) by Sally Ride Science (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/author/mking/>) · Posted in " News Releases (<https://sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/category/news-releases/>) " ·

Lu will be honored during the ITA Leadership Awards Weekend and will be awarded an \$8,000 postgraduate scholarship

From [Intercollegiate Tennis Association \(https://wearecollegetennis.com/2025/06/24/2025-ita-sally-ride-stem-award/\)](https://wearecollegetennis.com/2025/06/24/2025-ita-sally-ride-stem-award/), June 20, 2025

Tempe, AZ — It is with great pleasure that the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) announces the selection of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) standout Jessica Lu as the 2025 ITA Sally Ride STEM Award winner as endowed by Tam O’Shaughnessy.

“Each year, I’m inspired by the remarkable stories and accomplishments of the finalists for the ITA Sally Ride STEM Award—and this year was no exception,” said ITA CEO David Mullins. “Jessica’s selection from such an exceptional group of student-athletes is a true testament to her dedication, intellect, and character. I have every confidence that she will remain a shining ambassador for MIT Tennis and for the broader college tennis community for many years to come.”

As a trailblazer both on and off the tennis courts, Lu will be honored with a \$8,000 postgraduate scholarship to pursue her future ambitions of becoming a Master of Engineering in Computation and Cognition at MIT. Additionally, the MIT women’s tennis team will receive a \$2,000 donation in her honor.

“I’m deeply honored to receive the ITA Sally Ride STEM Award, named after a woman who followed her passions with unwavering courage,” said Lu. “Dr. Ride’s legacy reminds me that I don’t need to fit into one box; you can be an astronaut, scientist, athlete, professor, CEO, writer, and leader all in one lifetime. This award inspires me to treasure the curiosity to explore and to be brave in pursuing the future I want to help build.”

Growing up within the sport of tennis, Lu has always looked at the game from a different lens, being taught to combat low, fast-paced rallies with alternative tools that better suited her playing style and skillset.

Utilizing this mindset toward her approach to education, Lu found the perfect fit for her at MIT, where she was able to combine her loves of tennis and STEM to flourish both athletically and academically at one of the nation’s top educational institutions.

As a four-time NEWMAC All-Conference Singles First Team selection, Lu went an impressive 22-5 across all singles competitions this year and helped the Engineers to a 17-3 overall record and a NEWMAC Conference Tournament Championship for the eighth consecutive year.

“I am so proud and happy for Jay for being recognized as the 2025 ITA Sally Ride STEM Award winner,” said MIT Women’s Tennis Head Coach, Carol Matsuzaki. “Jay has been an incredible ambassador for the team and MIT throughout her time here. Her fierce competitiveness as well as her exceptional sportsmanship will be

remembered for many years to come. She has also grown so much as a leader and has been a fantastic mentor for her teammates. It's quite an honor to be recognized for an award named after Sally Ride, such an accomplished scientist and athlete. Thank you to Tam O'Shaughnessy for creating and endowing the award!"

Recently graduating from MIT with her degree in Computation and Cognition, Lu is set to return to MIT this fall where she will embark on becoming a Master of Engineering in Computation and Cognition.

Through this program, Lu hopes to explore designs in technology and reimagine large language models that are often unpredictable, prone to bias, and not always aligned with human goals. By focusing on this, Lu hopes to explore ways to use these large language models more effectively to serve educational purposes for all levels of learners.

As just the fourth recipient of this prestigious award, Lu now joins Hannah Kassaie (Case Western Reserve University, 2024), Mckenzie Ferrari (University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth, 2023), and Anna Tifrea (California Institute of Technology, 2022) as winners of this award.

"I am so excited that Jessica Lu is being honored with the 2025 ITA Sally Ride STEM Award," said O'Shaughnessy, who was Ride's life partner and co-founder of Sally Ride Science. "I know Sally would be too! At MIT, Jessica excelled on the tennis team just as she did in her Computation and Cognition studies. Jessica understands that a person's interests and passions, like Sally's, have no limits!"

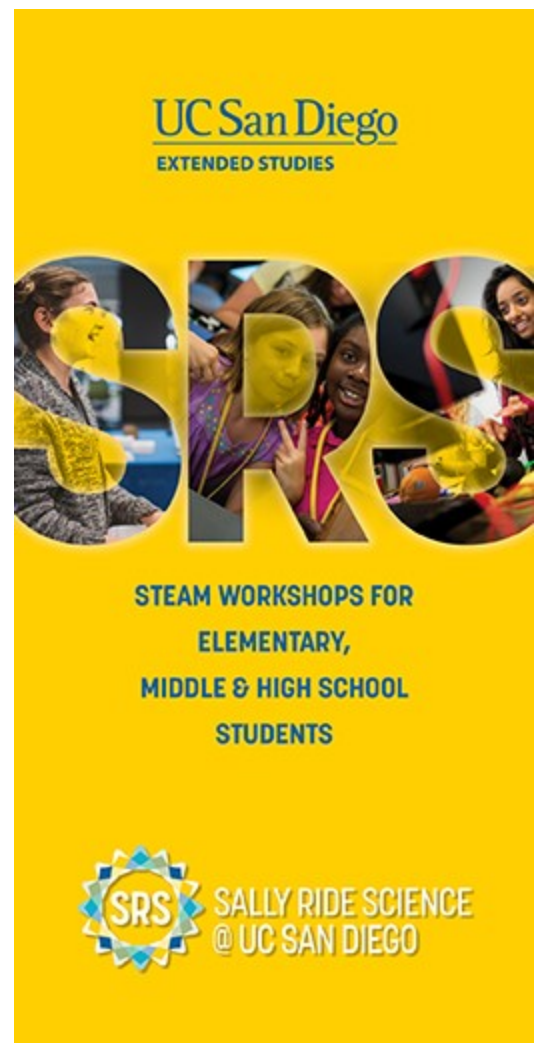
The ITA Sally Ride STEM Award as endowed by O'Shaughnessy was created to honor a female student-athlete who demonstrates zeal, dedication, and perseverance towards her tennis training and competition, STEM studies, and long-term goals. The recipient of the award will receive a grant of \$8,000 to pursue her dreams. The award money given to the student-athlete may be used in any way she wishes (e.g., tuition, books, rent, etc.) Additionally, \$2,000 will be donated to the women's tennis program of the institution from which the award winner graduated.

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