

Jinny Nathans: This is Jinny Nathans in Phoenix at the AMS annual meeting, January 8, 2019. I am chatting with Sepi Yalda and she's going to tell us how she got started with her membership in AMS. Sepi?

Sepi Yalda: Thank you. I started my membership with AMS when I was a graduate student, and the very first time I attended an AMS annual meeting was when I was a graduate student and it really played an important role in not only my educational path but also career development. I was able to network and meet other professionals and also present my work, and I think it led to my career as an in academia. When I was a faculty member and I attended a conference it allowed me to serve on a number of committees, and one that stands out in my mind is the Board on Women and Minorities. It allowed me to interact with people that were interested in some of the challenges and issues that we need to face in our community for women and minorities and their progress in their careers, pursuing careers in atmospheric and related sciences. I'm very proud that I got to serve as chair of the Board on Women and Minorities, and during this time through the work of some of our members, we were able to initiate and establish the Coriolis reception which now has been going on for a number of years and has grown tremendously. So I'm very proud of what AMS has achieved and the openness to ideas on the diversity of our community and our membership and as I enter my 21st year in academia it is still serving me in my profession. I am now bringing students every year to the conference and in my 21 years we have brought a range anywhere from five or six, to 32 students this year, to the conference and again the establishment of the student conference has been of tremendous value to our students and of the course the professional conference in terms of interaction and networking has been valuable.

JN: I am going to ask you a question, can you talk in a little bit more detail about two things. One, how you feel about the volunteer activities and how so many people volunteer their time for AMS to make these things possible, and then also more specifically about the Board on Women and Minorities.

SY: I think this Society is unique in many ways, I think many of us in atmospheric sciences are truly interested in our field, it's a passion, it's not something that we just fell into, so as a result, I think we are committed to the progress in the field, whether it's through our research or through educating the next generation. I think AMS provides that setting and that venue to not only share our research and collaborate but also really provide for the next generation in terms of their progress and their education, and I think our science serves the society at large and as a result, I think that as members we are very committed to helping in any way that we can, and so the volunteer activities I think come naturally to the members of the Society. I don't believe that anyone is pushed to serve in any capacity.

In terms of the Board on Women and Minorities, I think that there are a lot of different activities that the Board accomplishes. One of the ones that stands out in my mind is the luncheon that is hosted every year for the women in atmospheric science, women and I should say friends, because it is not just limited to women, and we've had a distinguished set of speakers and also panel discussions really addressing some critical issues. The Board also does a survey, and that survey is critical in terms of understanding the nature of the Society and the changing membership of the Society and some of the critical issues. So I think the Board is active not only

in addressing issues that are critical perhaps to the membership, but also to the greater atmospheric sciences community.

JN: Can you also talk a little bit about how you became interested in history and then your activities with the history committee?

SY: Yes. I was always interested in history of science, but I attended a meeting at the Natural History Museum with Jim Fleming when I was probably in my second or third year as a faculty member at Millersville University, and the information about the meeting was shared by one of my colleagues in the history department and I attended the meeting and there was a lot of interest and it was a small meeting and Jim Fleming reached out to me, and he said “well you know have you ever taught a course, have you considered teaching a course on history of meteorology?” And so it led to the development of the history of meteorology course and then I was asked to serve on the History of Meteorology Committee and that was a very good experience in terms of interacting with historians of science and learning a lot about how we can use the history of science in teaching science and as part of our curriculum. Most times we don't think about including the history of science, but it's really critical for our students to understand where we are in our science, and it can guide where we want to be in the future. It's really critical in terms of understanding diversity issues in our field. So then I had the pleasure of working on some historical biographies with Jim Fleming, and that's part of the work that we were doing, not necessarily as part of the History Committee but contributing to the historical biographies. And then I became chair of the History Committee and I am really amazed at how much the work of the history group has grown, the History Symposium. Now when you walk into the room there are a lot of people and I think the number of talks have increased, the range of the talks and the speakers has really expanded, and I think it's wonderful and I'm really really happy to see such a strong representation of the history component in the Centennial celebration and as one of the main initiatives.