

# SECTION NEWS

O C E A N  
S C I E N C E S



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## Paytan Receives 2004 Ocean Sciences Early Career Award

*Adina Paytan received the Ocean Sciences Early Career Award at the 2004 Fall Meeting last December, in recognition of significant contributions to and promise in the ocean sciences.*

### Citation

It is my grandest pleasure to cite Adina Paytan, of Stanford University, for the Ocean Sciences Early Career Award. Let me briefly tell you why I think she has stepped out onto the ocean dance floor and done the tango and the twist better than anyone.

First a bit of her story: Adina grew up in Israel and received her B.S. degree in geology and biology from Hebrew University (1985) and her M.S. in Earth sciences from the same institution in 1989. However, between her degrees from Hebrew University, she also received a M.S. in science education from the Weizmann Institute in 1987 and worked for Israel's Ministry of Education, clearly not the normal track for an ocean scientist. Of course, she also completed her mandatory Israeli military service, in this case, as a paratrooper. There is a metaphor here, because it explains why Adina is not afraid to jump into something new and challenging in her career. In any event, after her second M.S. degree she came to Scripps to work with Miriam Kastner, where she received her Ph.D. in 1996. She stayed on at Scripps for an additional two years as a postdoc with Marc Thiemens and Miriam after the birth of her



daughter Tali and to let her husband, Ron, finish his degree. She began the current phase of her academic career as an assistant professor at Stanford's Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences in 1999.

Her significant research contributions to date are several, but probably the most recognizable is her rigorous work on marine barite as a paleoproductivity tracer and stable repository of strontium, sulfur, and oxygen isotopes in oxic sediments. How significant is this? Well, four papers in *Science* using this barite tool suggest the community feels it's important. I'm not counting her other papers, more than 36, in journals such as *Nature*, *Paleoceanography*, and *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta*!

In addition to paleoceanography, Adina is also studying the modern ocean's biogeochemistry. For example, her lab's studies on phosphate cycling using tools such as P-NMR, alkaline phosphatase assays, molecular probes, and oxygen isotopes in phosphate are at the cutting edge of our science. There is something else for which Adina should be cited: her teaching and mentoring. She is contributing to the ocean sciences by her superb mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students who will also become leaders in the future. This year, she has had eight graduate students in her lab, and six undergraduates doing research projects under her supervision, and she's just graduated her first Ph.D. And she has only been at Stanford for six years.

Overall, I feel that Dr. Adina Paytan is clearly the perfect candidate for the Early Career Award. She will be a great role model to which other beginning ocean scientists can aspire. Adina's nomination was strongly supported by Tom Church, Ken Johnson, Billy Moore, and

Howie Spero, and I thank them for their efforts. My award citation was supposed to be one sentence long, but it didn't fit on the plaque, so I'll read it to you: "For her revolutionary work on marine barite as an ocean biogeochemical tracer, her impeccable skills as a teacher and mentor, and her infectious enthusiasm for ocean sciences."

—GREGORY CUTTER, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va.

### Response

I would like to thank Ellen Druffel and the AGU Oceanography Section Awards Committee; I am much honored to have been selected for this recognition. I would also like to thank Greg Cutter for his kind words; Kristina Faul for helping with the nomination; and Billy Moore, Tom Church, Howie Spero, and Ken Johnson for writing support letters. But most of all I would like to thank my lab members: graduate and undergraduate students, postdocs, and research associates, many of whom are here today with me. They are the ones who actually do the work in the lab, and without their dedication and enthusiasm I would not have been able to accomplish what I have.

I want to take this opportunity to say that I feel very privileged to be part of the oceanographic community. Doing interdisciplinary biogeochemical research in general and marine biogeochemistry in particular is a community effort. It requires understanding geological, chemical, physical, and biological processes and the complex interactions among them. This kind of interdisciplinary research is best addressed through multi-investigator interactions and collaborations. I am lucky and grateful to be working closely with so many colleagues that make this kind of research possible, fun, and rewarding. The stimulating and productive collaborations with my students, postdocs, and colleagues enable me to continue to learn, develop, and expand my horizons. I believe that this approach of interdisciplinary collaborative research facilitates interactions and the sharing of ideas and will result in better and greater science and more versatile, adaptable, and flexible individuals.

I see myself as a researcher, a teacher, and a mentor; I find all aspects of my work highly demanding and challenging but equally rewarding, and I am committed to excelling in all three aspects of my work.

—ADINA PAYTAN, Stanford University, Calif.