



CONNECT | ENRICH | TRANSFORM

Women in Marine Science Transcript

Tori: So this is just a really fun time to kinda talk about y'all, like women in science, and as a younger scientist, this is really cool to be able to see. So, I know I could just see you in the hallways all the time, and maybe eat lunch with y'all, but for everyone else can we kinda go through, like, what is your name? How are you involved at LUMCON? What area do you study?

Dr. Bockus: So for those of you who don't know me my name is Abigail Bockus, I am an assistant professor here at LUMCON and I've been a professor for three years, but I've been studying science and been involved in science for more than 12, and my research focuses on fish biology, and I study aquaculture, which is farming fish for food, and so I make sure that we are feeding fish the right nutrients to help them grow and stay healthy.

Dr. D'Andrilli: Okay, hi everybody. My name is Juliana D'Andrilli and I am an assistant professor at LUMCON as well. I just recently started my appointment, in late 2019, so I had just almost one year of professorship at LUMCON under my belt, but I've had five years of professorship at a different university, and I think about career stage from the point in which I felt like a scientist and then grew into a different scientist. So, I've been involved in science for more than 17 years, and then worked in industry, came back to academia, and have since then moved forward in an academic career for about 11 years. In environmental chemistry, so when I think about carbon, I think about all the different chemical molecules that move in and out of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems all over the world.

Dr. Rabalais: My name is Nancy Rabalais, I am currently a professor and the Shell Endowed Chair for Oceanography Wetland Sciences at Louisiana State University and I hold a distinguished professorship at LUMCON, where I began my first post PhD employment 37 years ago. And if I consider my time as a scientist at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute before I went back to work on my PhD, I would have to say that my career experience is about 44 years right now. And my area of interest, I've had a broad research career over the years with all sorts of different projects but the ones that I am focused on right now relate mostly to human interactions with the environment and their impacts including low oxygen conditions in the Gulf of Mexico and oil and gas activities on wetlands.

Dr. Archer: I'm Stephanie Archer, I'm also an assistant professor at LUMCON where I've been a professor for a grand total of eight months. Because my mom really did a wonderful job of encouraging my nerdiness, I think I've been some form of a scientist most of my life. I've been a PhD level scientist for about five years now. And I work on ecosystems that are formed by plants and animals like coral reefs, things like that, oyster reefs, and try to figure out how they work, and how human activities are changing how they work.

Tori: I love the, like, difference in everything y'all do, it's so cool to hear. So then, with what you're doing now, what got you involved in science? What made you want to be a scientist?

Dr. Rabalais: Well I'll start. I knew in 8th grade biology that I was going to be a biologist. It was probably the teacher and her ability to get me interested. On to high school I took two biology classes, mainly it was to avoid taking physics, which was never my favorite topic even in undergraduate. And also living in Corpus Christi, Texas which is on the Gulf Coast, I began to spend more time at the beach, learned how to scuba dive, and that got me interested in marine research. In my undergraduate, the last two years of my undergraduate were spent at a regional College Texas A&I University and many of the field trips took me to marine habitats in South Texas, and I just started learning the natural history, and appreciating it, and it went from there.

Dr. Bockus: Yeah, I'll chip in too. So, I was born and raised in Kansas which is about as far from the ocean as you can get and somehow I became a marine biologist, and people are always like, "What's happening? How did, you know, how did that happen?"

Tori: Yeah

Dr. Bockus: And, like, I don't have a great answer, but the easiest way I can describe it, is like, people who want to become a doctor probably haven't cut into a body before, but they know they like it, or they want to do it.

Tori: Good point.

Dr. Bockus: And I felt the same way. I was like, why do you like the color blue? Like, this is my jam. I just, this is what I want. And so, I pushed really hard to make that happen and I made it happen. And so I feel like that's a good example. Like, it's so amazing in Nancy's case, people who have these opportunities to get involved and have the experience and I didn't really have that, but I just really, I just really wanted to make it happen. So I did it.

Tori: You crushing it too!

Others: Yeah girl! Let's go!

Dr. Archer: So I'll jump in there. I also actually grew up in the middle of the country, Missouri and Kansas, back and forth between the two. And, I knew I wanted to do science of some sort because I spent a lot of time outside and I loved math, and science was really one of the only careers that I could see that combines those two things. And then I got exposed to marine science in high school. I had a really amazing teacher who thought it was really important for kids from the middle of the country to know something about the ocean because most of our planet is the ocean. I'd been to the ocean before, but I had never really thought about all the

things that lived under there. And it was that course that really changed my life and put me down the marine ecology field in particular.

Dr. D'Andrilli: My answer builds on everybody's answers. Well, if I can use everybody's experiences. So, mine starts with my mom, which connects with Stephanie's story, how she wanted both of her children to connect with nature at a very young age. And I grew up on Long Island in New York on the beach. So it was anything outside of the house all the way to the ocean. There were always things to look at, things to listen to, things to hold in your hands and connect with. And she was a huge advocate for that. So by the time I took science classes in school, it just became, just one of those other things that you really enjoy. So then along Nancy's answers, I had a fantastic set of biology, chemistry, and physics teachers in high school. And I went to college and tried them all and see which one I loved the most. And then that goes into the way Abigail explained her answer because, I wound up, while loving biology, excelling in a more being excited and curious way in chemistry and physics, and I had the educators push me and support me throughout that process. And then it just became a big old solid line through all those stories, because my greatest love in science is learning about, understanding, and helping the environment. And I can do that as a chemist and a physicist, and learn about how things are, how they will change, and what we can do to make it a better place in the future.

Tori: Wow

Dr. Rabalais: To comment on mothers, and parents, encouraging certain types of careers. Growing up in the 60s, with a mother who grew up in the Great Depression and was a stay at home mom with four children, she encouraged me or demanded that I take typing as a junior in high school, which definitely is worth doing, and taking stenography as a senior in high school, because I would need to be able to get a job when I got out of high school. And I was not expected to be where I am today, at all, by my family. I never went camping, I never got to do much outside until I left home and worked my way through college, and discovered all these other things. So people my age may have very different experience with beginnings of their love of biology or science or marine science then I did.

Tori: So then with that in mind, like, you've mentioned a lot about support, how you got there, and how some people weren't really expecting it to pan out, how you pushed and were able to make it happen. So were there ever any doubts about, like, becoming a scientist because of the fact that there were not that many women in science, it seemed like a role that was really new and needed to be broken into? Did you ever second-guess yourself because of that?

Dr. Archer: I would just say that, again going back to my, my, mom, she really instilled a self-confidence and to the point of being blissfully unaware, for me. I never, I was well into this whole becoming a professional scientist thing, well into my PhD, before I really realized that it was going to be harder because I'm a woman. It never really crossed my mind that it was something that I might not, that other people might not expect me to do. So, I guess for myself, no it never, being a woman never entered the equation.

Dr. Bockus: Yeah, I'll say I feel sort of similar, like when I was younger thinking about going into it, you're just like so jazzed and so I, I, I didn't have any reservations, but I would say now that I'm further along in my career, maybe some of those discrepancies on more men being involved than women, like I'm more aware of that. Like, I'll see these committees and they're all men, or maybe one woman on a huge committee of 15 people and so I feel like now I'm a little more aware of how it might be harder to break into some of those circles as a woman.

Dr. D'Andrilli: I have a similar experience with that, as well, it didn't come from my parents, they were very open about anything I wanted to do. If I wanted to study something one day and something the next they were fine with all of that. I don't even think we ever had a conversation about expectations in the professional sense, whatever gender you are, I don't even think we had that conversation. It was just support, and how are you gonna get there, and then go do it. I met adversaries once I got to graduate school, in terms of that split, where you see different departments and different ratios of different genders: predominantly male in chemistry and physics. And then that level of expectation was brought to me on my first week of orientation in graduate school, and it was very much a situation in which I was told I would never be successful as a scientist.

Tori: Wow

Dr. D'Andrilli: And I had never heard that from my parents, from my instructors, educators at any level. It wasn't until I entered that further along, professional education career that I started to hear that very often.

Tori: Wow

Dr. D'Andrilli: It's good to open your eyes and see what's around you, and to learn from it, and certainly did not prohibit any of, any of my drive to continue on and to become successful if I could do it.

Dr. Rabalais: I would say that I never let it obstruct my desire to become a scientist and to do the research that I've done over the years. However, I had, I don't want to say many, but I had pretty significant views of a former director that women weren't good scientists, and he did his best to get rid of me, and I was non-tenure-track which means that even if I didn't survive this, I still would not have a job, and then another assistant professor going on associate professor, which is, you know, it's a big deal, and it can shape your career. At that point she and I both fought and we won and we were able to continue our careers. I continued on at LUMCON, she eventually left and went to NOAA as a program manager, but the fact that I might not have the continued opportunities that I had worked so hard to build, might not be a part of my future, that is what made me consider "do I want to be a scientist?" And that was because of the sexism. I have also been subjected to sexual harassment, and that's not pleasant, but I managed to, one of the things I believe is being professional in all ways, and that passed but it was not a very comfortable situation.

Tori: Wow. So, I know Juliana you said something that kinda, like, stuck with me, you had mentioned “it's good to be aware, keep your eyes open” like it's good to recognize what's going on. Do y'all, does anyone else have any good advice for, like, a young woman going into science? Like, what advice would you have given yourself, looking back? Your younger self, what would you tell yourself?

Dr. Rabalais: Mine is to be honest all the time, it's being professional at all times, working hard, it's being creative, it's publishing things in science so that nobody can doubt your scientific credentials. And to try to surround myself with a broad cohort of colleagues that support me and support the joint research that we do and that then I think my. . .over the years.

Dr. Archer: So I'll build on this, kinda speaking about what Juliana said initially is that I actually wish I was aware of the challenges, earlier on, that would be put in front of me because I am a woman. Just so I would have better tools to fight back against those roadblocks. And so, educating yourself about the difficulties that you will face. For a really good example of this is your letters of recommendation, as a woman, will be more likely to focus on service rather than your excellence in science so having, gathering materials that document this in a scientific way and maybe giving those to your letter writers before they write a letter sort of thing. And then, building on one of the things that Nancy said is, learn early that it's, that it's okay to remove yourself from toxic situations whether that's with a mentor or a peer group. And surround yourself with people who are really supportive, science is a big field now, there's lots of really amazing people in it. And finding people that you work best with. And learn how to say no. Women get asked to do a lot of things that men in this field don't get asked to do. So learning to say no early, and often, and being honest with yourself about when you need to, is a big one.

Tori: Wow, yeah. What's up Juliana?

Dr. D'Andrilli: Yes, I, I wanted to first and foremost say it's it's wonderful listening to everybody's answers, it's wonderful to be able to build on top and think about how much of it is relatable to all of us, cuz that's what I'm sensing so far in the conversation. I've been thinking a lot about this question, “what advice would you give to yourself?” May have thought about it since Tori originally asked me a week ago. And what that might mean, that hasn't already been said. I think the biggest difference in being more prepared for the next hurdles that I faced, with that particular example of a professor saying “you'll never make it”, that type of, when you meet that type of indication in your career. I think about my very strong chemistry and physics department professors from undergraduate and would have given the advice to myself back then to ask more questions of them as in “what's out there?” right? I didn't have a good idea of what was out there, my undergraduate departments were flooded with professional women. And that showed me something that didn't exist when I went to the next industrial position or the next institution in general. And the best advice I would like to give myself is to ask more questions about how to be prepared, and then what to look for in a good mentor. So the things that Stephanie and Nancy had touched on in terms of hold on to those healthy relationships, but how to look for the strengths in good strong support systems.

Dr. Bockus: Yeah, I mean everything everyone says so great and I have an answer too. Something a little different, so like I said I'm from Kansas and I was actually raised in a really conservative household, sort of this man is the head of the household, you know, dynamic, and I didn't realize until I was almost done with graduate school that I have a natural capacity to sort a defer leadership, or defer someone heading a project, that's a man. And I caught myself doing that, and then I realized I actually know way more about that than that guy, so why am I not coming to myself and saying, "hey, you can do that, you can leave that." And so, it's actually something I've been working on in myself to, to basically, just like, know your own strengths, know what you know, and like believe in yourself that you can totally do that. And I don't know if anyone else has experienced that too but that's something that I've had to work on internally. Which I think is, like, really deeply ingrained in certain parts of our society.

Tori: Wow. So with that (multiple people talking at once) oh, sorry Nancy, go for it.

Dr. Rabalais: I have a yin yang attitude towards saying "no." I am not capable of saying "no" often because the "yeses" bring me opportunities. Even when they overload me with work, but one of the things that I did, and many of you probably are doing, is that I volunteered, a lot, within scientific societies, and review panels, and reviews. This all led to me being established as a good peer, that led to even greater responsibilities as a Chair of the Ocean Sciences Board for the National Academy of Sciences or the President of the Coastal Estuarine Research Federation. They put me up against a well-known estuarine ecologist, who thought "I don't have to worry about this", and I got elected so do it and don't say no too often, if you say, if you say no because it's not fair that's definitely justified, but my inability to say "no" has got me into a lot of working groups and relationships that have only made my career much better.

Dr. Archer: I'll, I'll build on that, I think, through a lot of that I would agree with Nancy, it's about not just reflexively saying "yes", I guess. Take time to think about it and being comfortable saying "no" when it is the right thing for you. Because, for myself, it's hard to say "no" even when I know it's not the thing I should be doing.

Others speaking over one another

Dr. Bockus: I think, like, along those lines too, as a woman there's the potential that experiences might not get dropped in our lap as often as men, so pursuing those. Being like, "hey I like that. How do I get involved in that?" Like don't be afraid to speak up and also I think, like, with research or your career, it's really scary to try something new when you don't really feel like you know what you're doing, so just not be scared to start, just try it, you know just like, even for me now like, it's hard to like write that first paragraph or reach out to that person, but just always putting yourself out there like Nancy said, that's how you build your network when you get involved, you got to try.

Tori: Has that gotten better, like you said things don't really get dropped in your lap as much and everything y'all have talked about is about you going out, and you're pursuing this, you are breaking down those walls. Like has there been any development to a better pipeline to create

those opportunities for women or better, just a better way for women to excel in science specifically?

Dr. Rabalais: I began my volunteerism with regional science societies: the Texas Academy of Science and the Gulf Estuarine Research Society. And that broadened my set of colleagues to at least the entire Gulf Coast and I could, I could learn a whole lot from them, and they supported me and what I was doing in these roles. So I've, I've only had very good experiences, mostly, with the things I get involved in. They may end up being too much work, but I may possibly be appointed to the National Academy of Science committee on Oil in the Sea number four. I served on number three and those people remember if you do a good job or not along the way, and if you are doing a good job and you are contributing, and you are thoughtful, then those opportunities are just going to grow.

Tori: Have you seen a shift, Dr. Rabalais, have you seen a shift or gradual changes, maybe, in the culture of marine science over your career in regards to women in science?

Dr. Rabalais: I, I would say I have definitely seen a shift, from when I began in the 60s, 70s. It was certainly male-dominated at that time, but not that the men were dominating. Many of the men were supportive, and that helped a whole lot. I would say when I started working on a more international basis, in lots of things that I did, that there were women in other countries who held very high and prestigious positions, and I also became aware that parts of Europe, particularly Scandinavia, really supported women scientists and helped them build their careers. I'm not sure that's the same in the US, but it certainly is that way in other countries. You don't develop a proposal to do something interesting with biogeochemistry in the Baltic Sea without including female scientists, and many of the principal investigators have written op-eds for Nature and Science concerning the need to get more women involved in science. It's, so that's a very different attitude than I find in the US. And it has changed over the years, there are many more men who support female scientists now, then there were when I was coming up in my career.

Dr. Archer: So I'll add them a little bit to the international bit that Nancy mentioned. One thing, so I've lived and worked in Canada for a bit, I was at a government agency. In the US it's often quite male-dominated, and I worked in one of the sections that received the most funding in the Pacific region and we had one male out of 30 people. It was an eye-opening experience, and ever single, almost every single one of the women that I worked with had children. And the reason that they were able to have fulfilling family and careers, family life and careers, there's a year of family leave in Canada.

Tori: Wow

Dr. Archer: Work-life balance is, expectations are dramatically different, it's expected that family comes first and science comes second. And it's a very different culture, and it, it not only helps the women, but it also, I feel, helped the men they were able to stay home with their families, as well, when they had newborns. Just that level of support, removed something that I think

can present a barrier to lots of women because perceived notion that you might have to choose between having a family and having a career in science. There was none of that in Canada, and so just that simple thing changed a lot. In the US we're bad at family leave, really bad.

Dr. Bockus: Yeah, I've had some really interesting conversations with faculty members a little bit older than me at other institutions, like this woman she has kids and she was saying that male faculty members there could easily be, like, "I need to leave early today, you know I have to go pick up my son from whatever, whatever," but she felt like she had to hide it when she had to do that, because the expectations, even if it's the same situation, for men and women can be different and that's hard.

Tori: Dang, so how do y'all manage the work-life balance between being a scientist and you're at home life?

Dr. Rabalais: Before we leave what Abigail just talked about

Tori: Oh, yeah, go for it.

Dr. Rabalais: And that, I am on a committee for the LSU faculty senate that looks at complaints from individuals about their treatment, or unfair practices, or lots of different things, but one of the current issues is that a male requested an extension on the tenure clock because he and his wife were expecting a newborn. He was denied, if a woman had possibly submitted the request, but she wasn't an LSU faculty member, she probably would have been encouraged and supported. So there are reverse discrimination on our elders or our supervisors as to the role of women and men in home life.

Tori: Wow.

Dr. Rabalais: And I find it very disappointing.

Dr. Archer: And really it shouldn't be up for debate, it should be automatic that family...

Dr. Rabalais: Absolutely, absolutely

Dr. Bockus: Yeah so in terms of work-life balance, when I was in graduate school I, like, turned in some assignment and my professor wrote this note on the bottom of the assignment that says something to the extent of like, "the workplace will always ask for more, resist" and I like tore it off, put it up on my desk and like, it's hard, science is demanding, and I think you have to choose how much you're willing to work, and we all work really hard, and then you have to put your foot down. It's not always going to be the case that your employer is going to be like, "oh yeah, take, you know, take prioritize your family," you have to fight for it. So, I think all of us feel very comfortable telling our family to wait because we have to work, but we don't always feel comfortable telling work to wait cuz our family needs us, so I think, personally, I'm just working on that.

Dr. Archer: Getting to spend the time in Canada where work-life balance was more of an expectation than, than, than it is in the US, more than once in my first couple of years there I was told, “go home, go take a vacation, get out of the office” and slowly over my time there I did start to set much better boundaries about work-life balance. I work when I work, I don’t work when I don’t, and I restrict the number of hours that I, I, work unless there's an extreme extenuating circumstance and I’ve found that I'm actually more creative, more productive, and happier. Even though I love what I do, if I didn't set these rules, I would easily work most of the time because I get engrossed in what I'm doing, but I think for the benefit of my science, and for myself, it works a lot better to set strict boundaries and I'm learning to stick to that is hard. Because especially in graduate school you get in the kind of just constantly, like, working and that being normalized, but science doesn’t need to be the only thing in your life.

Dr. Rabalais: Stephanie I think I could have used your advice while I was coming up in my science career, I really do. [Talking over each other] I never knew when to let go.

Dr. D’Andrilli: For me, inside the boundary conditions that Stephanie talked about I still try to organize timed, scheduled moments of when to focus on what, and this is something that I've been comfortable doing for a really long time. So it's already in me. I like being busy, but inside the busyness there’s scheduled moments for each type of project, or connection, or brainstorm. And, I, I thrive with that kind of turn your brain on in one way and then turn it off in another. When it gets muddled it's very difficult, so I like that rigid portioning throughout the day, or if the day didn’t work and I'm only scheduling in the evening, that type of thing. Coming in, and then walking away, also exists with packets of when to do what inside those boundary conditions.

Dr. Bockus: Yeah, this is, like, a little off topic but...

Tori: Go for it

Dr. Bockus: When we are thinking about, like, what is it like to be a woman in science... So Nancy gave a great example of a, like a very obvious, horrible situation that occurred that was based in sexism, but I feel like a lot of the things that I experience are subtler than that, like it can almost be hard to tell if it’s because I'm a woman, is this because I'm a little bit younger than you, like I, I find that, like, really hard to figure out how to combat, and I would just like to hear people's opinion on, like, we know there's discrepancies and so how do we fight against it if we can't even identify it happening?

Dr. Rabalais: Good question Abigail, but I'll go back to it because my home life had two phases. I have been married twice now and I am still married to my second husband. But I would say that my science career was not necessarily supported by my first husband and it made it difficult, and not just because of the work hours, but because of a personality who wanted to be better than everybody else and saw me as competition. This, my second marriage, to Gene Turner at LSU has been a blessing. He has the same work ethic as I do about doing good science and staying on top of everything, and we have a daughter, Emily, that we both supported each other in her

raising, so that we could both conduct our careers. And I'm not sure I could have done what I have done now without his support, so that's, that's just my story of my "how to deal" with a, a home life and everything else along with science and career and traveling. It really helps to have a good partner in, in, that. What was... now, now, that I've gone on... Abigail what is the subtle things that you don't know how to quite deal with or...?

Dr. Bockus: Just, I don't know, some sometimes the enemy you can't see it, right? Like sometimes men are just preferentially chosen, like, it sometimes it's not easy to see what's hard about being a woman in science and I feel like those are the hardest questions to answer because, yeah, work hard, put yourself out there, but I just would love to hear peoples' opinions, I mean for me that was the hardest thing when I was thinking about this topic, don't know how to fight against that all the time.

Dr. Rabalais: I think it depends a lot on the personalities that your're dealing with because they bring a different history with them and ways of dealing with women in science. I predict that the next 25, 50 years is going to be much better for female scientists than it is right now because the old guard will be retiring and moving on and, in my opinion, the new guard has a much better appreciation for non-sexist decision-making and things like that. But those insidious things are, are, hard to deal with.

Dr. Archer: My response to this is that I actually resisted for a long time reading about biases against women and what it's, what it's like to be a woman in science because I was like, "I don't need to read that, I am a woman in science", but one of the things that has changed since I kind of gave in and I started reading about the actual studies that have been done about biases and what the challenges are, is that it helped me identify when those subtle things might be something that I just think I'm noticing versus when it is something that I know other people have experienced or there is a tendency and it, it also helped take away that nagging question of "Am I crazy? Or did that happen because I'm a woman." It's helpful, if that helps at all.

Dr. Bockus: Yes, I think that's awesome. That like, reminds me... I was in a meeting with someone and it's like you're saying, you're having this "Am I crazy?" moment where the whole dialogue, the whole conversation, just felt really condescending and I was like, this sucks, like I'm, I'm feeling bad about, like how this meeting is going down, and that experience helped me recognize that here at LUMCON we have a lot of senior male faculty and they never make me feel that way, they never make me feel super young and that I don't know what I'm talking about, I don't feel like gender dynamics come into our professional interactions, and it made me appreciate it so much that I don't have to deal with those negative dynamics. So sometimes when you experience them, yeah, it gives you that "I'm not crazy," this can happen, and this is how it feels when it's not happening, and it's awesome.

Dr. Rabalais: So Abigail, tell us about your home life and how it's affected by being a woman in science.

Tori: Yeah

Dr. Bockus: Great question. So my partner's a lawyer and since I'm a new professor we, and he's a new lawyer, we both have pretty demanding work schedules, and that kind of works for us right now. I'll also say that, we both love what we do. I love aquaculture, it is like one of my passions, I want to help feed the world, I feel like that's like what my skill set is, and we're actually in a long distance relationship and we've been living long distance for going on three or four years, because we both want to pursue our professions and it's working for us, and we see each other a lot, but I also think it's important, this isn't a woman issue, but it's important for young people to know that science can be tough, you might not get to choose what city you want to live in to do what you want to do, that's a reality that I think it's important for young people to know and to think about when they're deciding, like do I want to go into research, or do I want to go into teaching, what kind of science do I like? And it can be real exciting, it can send you all over the world, but it can also be a limitation. Yeah, work-life balance: has been better, but has been worse. So, and I also have a partner who is extremely supportive. Over three years ago I was like, "I'm moving 2000 miles away" and he's like, "sounds good go, for it babe" and so, it's just really great to have supportive people in your life, whether it's a partner, family, or friends. It's been really great.

Dr. Rabalais: So, I'll pose the same question to Juliana, we haven't heard from you. How, what's, how's your life experiences and juggling of life relationships affected your science, or science affected your relationships?

Dr. D'Andrilli: I feel very lucky that I've always made a space for my personal health throughout my science career, in relationship or out. I spent most of my graduate school days ending work at a certain time, and making sure I was at the gymnasium either doing gymnastics or just weight training, for my own sanity. So in my, in my personal home life, the things that I need to do on a daily basis: create, play some music, do a push-up, all those things are all there all the time. I was very much luckier to meet a fantastic scientist who is very driven about environmental research, has the same kind of, I guess, almost over willingness to work super hard for whatever amount of hours as long as he's happy. And our scientific paths can be separate, and then they cross each other in different aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. So we have found a way to work, individually, on the things that we love to do for a certain amount of hours, sometimes too many hours, and then we enjoy relaxing moments of crossing paths with our science as well. So my mental capacity to balance a home life, of whatever, would be going for a walk, could be painting or something that's just not related to building the next experience in my research program. My partner's created a space for that so that our family unit can thrive. Without his support over the last 10 years it would not have been as easy, but it also was something that I could reciprocate for him, so we both play a very supportive role for each other. And so sometimes I have to play the "ah, ah, ah, you're not doing enough non-science things," you know, "take care of yourself" and sometimes I have to do more of that department and sometimes he has to do more of that department, but from what you've described Nancy with your current family situation, sounds very much similar, in terms of we're on the same brain wave of support and science in a way where both of our careers can flourish.

Dr. Rabalais: I think I have been sharing incredible moments with upcoming female scientists, LUMCON, and they have great potential and great careers ahead of them. So thank you all for allowing me to be the senior member of this group and share my experiences, that yours are going to be so much different, and I hope they're all positive.

Tori: Thank you

Dr. Archer: Thank you Nancy, I just want to add on to that, and say that people like Nancy were, had it a lot harder because a lot more often they had to walk into the room and be the only one there, the only woman there, and it's a lot easier to walk into a room and see somebody else that clearly shares something with you. And so, one thing Nancy's generation did for us is to be that person in the room, so that we can walk into and see, and feel more comfortable entering that room. And so one thing that I think is important for women in science to remember, especially white women in science like myself, is that we've had those trailblazers and we're in a much better place because of them, and now we have a foothold to support other groups who might not, particularly black, indigenous, or other women of color and so Nancy is ours, as a means to help somehow make it easier for them to enter the room as well.

Dr. Rabalais: I agree

Dr. D'Andrilli: I wanted to add a big thank you also to not our, not only our personal support systems at home when we're balancing work and life, but our very strong, as you can see in the screen, support system at work. It has made all the difference in the easiest times and in the hardest times, and I don't think that we would be where we are today without those strong systems. Be it any gender, just hanging on to those healthy environments, propelling through hard times with people that will support you and lift you up and you lift them up at the same time. So big thank you to my colleagues who are also spearheading and supporting me and my career and hopefully they feel the same way about me and there's.

Dr. Bockus: Yeah, I echo everyone's sentiments. It's been so fantastic to have Murt and Nancy as female mentors, and support people, and collaborators at LUMCON, and so great to have Juliana and Stephanie join the team, so now we have a lot of females sitting in those faculty meetings. And so it's just been really encouraging on both ends of the spectrum and I think we're building a really encouraging workplace.

Tori: Yeah I agree, thank y'all for helping us out and being such a good example for people watching, and just being willing to be creative and get involved, and see now that because of Nancy and people like her we have that foot in the door, how do we kick it open? So thank you for being a part of that action and that movement.

Dr. Rabalais: You're welcome, and as you can see, I'm not the only outspoken person among these four women and I hope to continue in that quest.

Dr. Archer: I'm, I'm a quiet wallflower, I don't know what you're talkin about.

Dr. DAndrilli: Not a problem Nancy

All: Laughter