

The Wonderful, Frenetic Years of the Plate Tectonic Revolution: How It Was to Be in the Middle of It

Dr. Tanya Atwater, Professor Emerita, UC Santa Barbara

The plate tectonic revolution broke upon the Scripps Institute of Oceanography with a lecture by Fred Vine in December of 1966. Tanya Atwater arrived there a few weeks later to start graduate school; she found the place in a complete, excited chaos. During the next few years she had a front-row seat to the evolution of this new world view. In this lecture, she will tell this story, using images and animations to describe her experiences as the conceptual world of earth sciences was completely upended and reconstituted.

Biography: Tanya Atwater is a professor emerita in the Earth Science Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She was educated at M.I.T., UC Berkeley and Scripps Institute of Oceanography, earning her PhD in 1972. She joined the UCSB faculty in 1980. Dr. Atwater is well known for her works on the plate tectonic evolution of western North America and the San Andreas fault system. Since retirement, Atwater has concentrated on public education and visual communication. Her animations are extensively used in classrooms and public venues around the world. She has many honors, including the Geological Society of America Structure and Tectonics Lifetime Achievement Award, an Emmy, and election to the National Academy of Sciences.