

Editor of professional journal for chemists to deliver Scholes Lecture

3/18/03

Madeleine Jacobs, editor-in-chief of Chemical and Engineering News, the publication of the American Chemical Society, one of the largest professional organizations in the country, will deliver the fifth annual Samuel R. Scholes Jr. Lecture at 7 p.m. April 7 in Nevins Theater, Powell Campus Center. Her speech is entitled, "The Two Cultures, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance." Jacobs will draw together themes from two apparently disparate books, C.P. Snow's *The Two Cultures* and the 1974 cult book by Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. The two works have "more than meets the eye" in common, according to Jacobs, who weaves the two together in what has been called a "philosophical, thought-provoking and sometimes humorous talk" in which she will explain "why it is imperative that scientists and humanists alike work together to close the chasm between the two cultures." Jacobs, the first woman to be appointed editor-in-chief of the 80-year-old weekly news magazine published by the American Chemical Society for 144,000 readers, including society members and other interested professionals. She oversees a staff of 50 people in seven news bureaus around the world. A chemistry major at George Washington University, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1968 with honors and distinction, Jacobs planned to attend graduate school at Stanford University to earn a Ph.D. in chemistry. Family matters, however, kept her in Washington, D.C., and she spent a year in graduate studies at the University of Maryland before joining the staff of Chemical Engineering News in 1969 as an assistant editor and writer both in the Washington, D.C. office and on the West Coast. In 1972, she worked at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases as a writer and editor, and two years later joined the staff at the National Bureau of Standards, now the National Institute of Standards and Technology, where she rose to the position of chief of media liaison and general publications. She was the principal media spokesperson for NBS and oversaw the publication of a monthly research news magazine and numerous publications. As a freelance writer, she contributed to *Physics Today* and *The Smithsonian Magazine*, using her chemistry training and background to write about science developments for a general audience. In 1979, she joined the Smithsonian Institution as chief science writer and was then promoted to director of the Office of Public Affairs. She launched the nationally syndicated *Smithsonian News Service* and oversaw publication of three periodicals, including a quarterly research bulletin. As director, she was the principal media spokesperson for the Institution. She received the Secretary's *Smithsonian Gold Medal* for her work to increase awareness of the Smithsonian among underrepresented audiences. She returned to Chemical and Engineering News in 1993 as managing editor, the first in more than 10 years. Jacobs has spent the past 10 years rebuilding and reorganizing the staff for greater flexibility and efficiency. She became editor-in-chief in 1995, and has overseen two redesigns of the magazine, the expansion of the editorial staff into the Pacific Rim and marketing and advertising efforts that have led to significant increase in ad revenues, as well as creation of an on-line version of the magazine. Jacobs has received more than three dozen awards for outstanding science writing from national organizations, and has also been awarded numerous awards, including the 2003 award from the American Chemical Society for her work in encouraging women in careers in the chemical sciences. She will receive an honorary doctorate from George Washington University in May. Jacobs' professional interests include trends in the chemical industry, the public image of chemistry, employment, minority representation and gender equity among scientists. She has written about these topics for more than 30 years and frequently lectures on them. A native of Washington, DC, Jacobs has been married to an artist for more than 30 years and has a stepson, a daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. Her hobbies include cooking, photography, swimming, weight-training, gardening and writing poetry. The Samuel R. Scholes Jr. Lecture was created by Dr. Josh Fierer, a 1959 alumnus of Alfred University, to honor his friend and professor of chemistry at AU, Samuel R. Scholes, Jr., a 1937 alumnus of AU who returned to his alma mater to teach.