

Acceptance speech

20 June 2023

Jeanne Altmann, awardee in the Ecology and Conservation Biology category (15th edition)

I am pleased and honored to be recognized by the BBVA Foundation and the Spanish National Research Council for my research on the behavioral ecology of wild primates. I'm most grateful to the committee in the Ecology and Conservation Biology category for their citation, and I'm delighted to be honored alongside my colleagues Marlene Zuk and Susan Alberts.

It's been my great privilege for the past 50 years to study the wild baboons of the Amboseli basin in southern Kenya. Through this work, I've tried to understand why primates behave the way they do, how their traits allow them to solve the problems that their ecological and social environments present to them, and how non-human primates can serve as models for understanding how animals will respond to the environmental change that is happening all around us.

A major emphasis of my research has been understanding the intergenerational nature of primate relationships, and the great importance of intergenerational influences on the lives of these animals. What's gone hand-in-hand with that research agenda is an increasing understanding, in my own life, of the importance of intergenerational relationships among scientists; the influences of my mentors, and in turn my opportunity to mentor the next generation of my collaborators, have been especially meaningful for me.

I also owe a deep debt of gratitude to my late husband Stuart Altmann, who supported me in all my scientific endeavors and who partnered with me in establishing the Amboseli Baboon Research Project all those years ago. My children, Michael and Rachel Altmann, and the beautiful families they have created, have been and continue to be inspirational presences in my life. Not only have they provided love and support over the years, but their keen, insightful minds have contributed time and again to my own understanding of my science and of the world. I'm full of gratitude and admiration for them. My

collaborators and students have contributed hugely to my research over the years, and our field team in Kenya – especially Raphael Mututua, Serah Sayialel, Kinyua Warutere, and Long'ida Siodi – have truly made possible all of our research accomplishments. And my years of research would not have been possible without the determination of the Kenyan people to conserve their ecological heritage, and without the gracious hospitality of the Kenyan people and the Kenya government over many decades.

Finally, I want to recognize the work of the BBVA Foundation. Its mission to recognize and contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge and the creation of culture is of overwhelming importance, especially in this era when opportunities for change are so abundant, but at the same time the perils that society faces, and the consequences of failure to act, are so enormous.

Thank you.