Sharon Megdal Receives Women of Influence Lifetime Achievement Award

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UA professor Sharon B. Megdal received this year's Lifetime Achievement Award at the 13th annual Women of Influence event for her outstanding achievements and contributions in water policy and water resources management.

Presented by Inside Tucson Business and Tucson Local Media, the Women of Influence awards honor the strong leadership of women in the community and the workplace. On March 22, more than 600 people from across Pima County celebrated this year's 47 finalists, who were chosen from more than 120 nominees in 18 categories.

Megdal is the C.W. & Modene Neely Endowed Professor and director of the UA's Water Resources Research Center, an extension and research unit of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. She also is a Distinguished Outreach Professor in the college's Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences.

"I am so honored to have received this award. Personally and professionally, I have wanted to make a difference and contribute to improving real-world policy-making," Megdal said. "I am grateful for all of the opportunities that living in Tucson and working at the University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences have provided."

Megdal's work ranges from local to international, and she is currently focusing on projects involving water management, policy and governance in growing, water-scarce regions; groundwater management and governance; groundwater recharge; transboundary aquifer assessment; and the voluntary water conservation program Conserve2Enhance.

"Over the past 20 years, Sharon has not only established the Water Resources Research Center as the premier source for research and engagement on water policy and management, she has also advanced these fields through educating and mentoring the next generation of water managers," said Shane Burgess, vice president for Veterinary Sciences and Cooperative Extension, and dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Megdal teaches Arizona Water Policy, a UA graduate course. She also directs the Water Sustainability Program and co-directs the UA Water, Environmental and Energy Solutions Program, both funded by the Technology Research Initiative Fund.

"My professional and personal goals include improving water management and policy through my educational, research and outreach/engagement projects and programs," Megdal said. "Much of this is done in a multidisciplinary setting, with my graduate class in Arizona Water Policy being a prime example."

Megdal has served on numerous Arizona boards and commissions, including the Arizona Corporation Commission, the State Transportation Board, the Arizona Medical Board and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District Water Board. In addition, she is a member of the Tucson Airport Authority, serves on the board of the Universities Council on Water Resources and the Western Rural Development Center and is immediate past president of the National Institutes for Water Resources.

"The caliber of nominees, and Sharon's achievement in winning the most prestigious award of the evening, cannot be overstated," Burgess said. "What an exceptional achievement from a unique Arizona leader and ambassador for the University of Arizona."

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