UC SANTA BARBARA
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‘Lab Girl’

Part One: “Roots and Leaves.” Part Two: “Wood and Knots.” Part three: “Flowers and Fruit.” Sounds a lot like life.

So goes “Lab Girl,” paleobiologist Hope Jahren’s coming-of-age memoir in which she “traces her path from an early infatuation with the natural world to her hard-earned accomplishments as a scientist recognized for breakthrough contributions to her field.”

“Lab Girl” is the UCSB Reads selection for the 2018 season.

An annual event now in its 12th year, UCSB Reads engages the campus and the Santa Barbara community in conversations about a key topic while reading the same book. UCSB Reads is presented by the UCSB Library in partnership with the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor. A committee that included faculty and staff members, administrators and student representatives made this year’s selection.

On Jan. 11 UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang, Executive Vice Chancellor David Marshall and Acting University Librarian Alan Grosenheider will be on hand at the library to distribute free copies of the book to registered UCSB students. “Lab Girl” will be on sale at the UCSB Bookstore as well.

A variety of UCSB Reads events, including faculty talks, book discussions, exhibitions and other programs will take place through winter and spring quarters, both on campus and in the community. Jahren will give a free public lecture April 3, 2018, in Campbell Hall.

“Lab Girl” chronicles Jahren’s coming-of-age experience as a female scientist and is juxtaposed against beautifully rendered meditations on the life of plants. With great courage, Jahren reflects on difficult periods in her life, from her struggles with mental illness to the financial hardships of starting a research lab, all the while celebrating the joys of scientific discovery and friendship.

Demonstrating the book’s appeal across disciplines, from the sciences to the humanities, Jahren is the recipient of both the National Book Critics Circle Award for Autobiography and the American Association for the Advancement of Science/Subaru Books & Film Prize for Excellence in Science Books. “Lab Girl” also was a finalist for the PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award, and was named one of the Best Books of the Year by The Washington Post, NPR, Slate and others.

Currently the J. Tuzo Wilson Professor at the University of Oslo, Norway, Jahren conducts research on living and fossil organisms, studying how they are chemically linked to the global environment. She received her Ph.D. from UC Berkeley and was a tenured professor at the University of Hawai’i from 2008 to 2016, where she built the Isotope Geobiology Laboratories with support from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Institutes of Health. She is the recipient of three Fulbright Awards, and is one of four scientists — and the only female — to have been awarded both Young Investigator Medals given in the earth sciences.

Questions about UCSB Reads can be directed to Alex Regan, events and exhibitions librarian, at UCSBReads@library.ucsb.edu or at (805) 893-3605. Follow along at #UCSBReads2018.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.