

Kaplan Award Committee 2024 Report

The Kaplan Award Committee was chaired by William (Ned) Friedman (Harvard University) in 2023-2024. Additional committee members were Jurg Schoenenberger (University of Vienna) and Maria Alejandra Gandolfo Nixon (Cornell University). By the end of January, 2024 we had received three excellent nominations. On February 8, 2024, the committee met to evaluate the candidates for the award. On February 9, 2024, I contacted the first (unanimous) choice (letter attached), Dr. Cynthia Jones of the University of Connecticut, who has accepted and will deliver the lecture at the annual meeting in June of 2024.

Best wishes,

William (Ned) Friedman

Arnold Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology
Director of the Arnold Arboretum
Harvard University

ned@oeb.harvard.edu

Phone: 617-384-7744

Professor Cynthia Jones
Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
University of Connecticut
Storrs, CT

Dear Cindi,

Congratulations! The Kaplan Memorial Lecture Committee of the Botanical Society of America hopes that you will accept our invitation to give the 2024 Donald R. Kaplan Memorial Lecture at the Botanical Society of America meeting this year. As you well know, this lecture series is dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Donald R. Kaplan, a long-standing member of the BSA and of the University of California, Berkeley faculty, who was the preeminent comparative plant morphologist of his generation.

The Kaplan Memorial Lecture was established to commemorate Don's contributions to botanical knowledge and to promote his research interests within the Botanical Society of America. Each year, we solicit nominations from the botanical community for people who can discuss a topic in the general area of comparative plant morphology/development,

framing it so that it is of interest to a general botanical audience while incorporating cutting edge scholarship that draws upon the nominee's research.

We had excellent nominations this year, but your nomination stood out. The committee members, Alejandra Gandolfo, Jürg Schönenberger, and I were deeply impressed with the range and beauty of your scholarship throughout your career, beginning with your early and pioneering graduate work on whole plant heterochrony to your most recent scholarship focused on the evolution of structure and function of members of the genus *Pelargonium* in southern Africa. In the words of your nominator:

She has been among the most innovative scholars throughout her distinguished career and has forged new ways of thinking about how plants evolve and function and has brought a precision and depth of analysis that is unequalled.

We, the members of the Kaplan Memorial Lecture Committee, fully concur! The letter writers for the nomination also noted that your scholarship epitomizes Don Kaplan's intellectual approach to plant investigations by always "asking the organism" – an approach to biology that is fundamental to excellence in the fields of plant morphology and anatomy.

The BSA meetings will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan this year, from June 15 to June 19. The Kaplan Memorial Lecture is typically on Tuesday, late afternoon, and is followed by a reception ("have a nut"). The Botanical Society of America will provide a \$500 honorarium and cover registration, travel (economy class), and lodging.

I would appreciate hearing within the next two weeks whether you can accept our invitation. (Of course, you have to!). Again, our warmest congratulations on this important recognition of your impactful contributions to the study of plant structure and development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William (Ned) Friedman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William (Ned) Friedman
Arnold Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology
Director of the Arnold Arboretum
Harvard University