
Ruth H. Preller, Ph.D.



Superintendent, Ocean Sciences Division U.S. Naval Research Laboratory

Dr. Ruth Preller became the Superintendent of the Ocean Sciences Division at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory's site located at Stennis Space Center (NRL-SSC), Mississippi, in 2019. The Ocean Sciences Division is a major center for in-house Navy research and development in ocean sciences and consists of approximately 220 federal employees and contractors. It is known nationally and internationally for its combination of theoretical, numerical, and experimental approaches to solving ocean problems from the seafloor to the air-ocean interface. In addition, the division serves as the focal point in the Navy and Marine Corps for assessing and identifying mapping, charting, and geodesy requirements, including prototype digital products and product coordination. She is also the coordinating manager for NRL's basic and applied research program in Battlespace Environments.

In 2018, Preller became the head of the Office of Research Support Services for NRL-SSC, providing support for various programs including: public affairs, safety, environmental, resource management, administrative information, facilities, and information systems services.

Preller entered the Senior Executive Service in September, 2004 when she became the Superintendent of the Oceanography Division at NRL-SSC. The division was the major center for in-house Navy research and development in oceanography and consisted of approximately 120 federal employees and contractors.

She joined the civilian federal service in 1983 as a research oceanographer at the Naval Ocean Research and Development Activity, and served as the head of the Coastal and Semi-Enclosed Seas Section at NRL from 1996-2004. From 2002-2003, she worked part time for the Physical Oceanography Program at the Office of Naval Research. During that period she worked with the other program officers to define the direction of research, review existing projects, and fund new projects in the field of numerical ocean modeling.

Preller's research has ranged from modeling and understanding the circulation of the Mediterranean Sea to sea ice modeling and forecasting. She has been responsible for the development and design of the U.S. Navy's sea ice forecasting systems since the mid 1980's, including the Polar Ice Prediction System. Her research also focused on the various aspects of coastal ocean prediction and led to the development of PCTides, the first Navy relocatable ocean model that provides forecasts of tidal elevation and tidally driven barotropic ocean currents anywhere around the globe.

Dr. Preller received bachelor's degrees in physics and german from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania; and master's and doctorate degrees in meteorology from Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida. She is a member of the American Geophysical Union, the American Meteorological Society (AMS), The Oceanography Society, The European Geophysical Union (EGU) and Sigma Xi. She served on the U.S.-Canadian Joint Ice Working Group from 1989-1999, the AMS Committee on Polar Meteorology and Oceanography from 1990-1993, the AMS Committee on Coastal Environments from 1999-2005, as EGU Secretary for Operational Oceanography from 2005–2009 and is currently head of the Executive Oversight Board of the Community Ice Code (CICE) modeling consortium. Preller received NRL's 75th Anniversary "Award for Innovation" in 1998 and is the recipient of the Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Executive in the Senior Executive Service in 2009.