



**Seismological Society of America**

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For immediate release

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**NOAA, University of Puerto Rico scientist elected president of SSA;  
Christa Von Hillebrandt-Andrade to lead world's largest society of seismologists**

April 13, 2011 – The Seismological Society of America has elected Christa von Hillebrandt-Andrade, manager of the NOAA National Weather Service Caribbean Tsunami Warning Program, to serve as its president.

The world's largest society of earthquake seismologists, SSA is an international scientific society devoted to the advancement of seismology and its applications in understanding and mitigating earthquake hazards.

“Christa von Hillebrandt-Andrade is a well recognized expert on tsunamis and seismology,” said Mary Lou Zoback, board member of SSA and chair of the nominating committee. “Her leadership will provide SSA an opportunity to strengthen its interaction and involvement with Latin American seismologists.”

Previously elected to serve as the society's vice president, von Hillebrandt-Andrade assumes the presidency at a challenging time, when fiscal pressure threatens the continued funding of the U.S. Geological Survey and the effective collection and assessment of earthquake data.

“Saving lives from earthquakes is a complex puzzle in which every piece is essential,” said von Hillebrandt-Andrade, who will serve a two-year term as the society's president while continuing in her position as the manager of the NOAA National Weather Service Caribbean Tsunami Warning Program (CTWP), located at the University of Puerto Rico. Funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, CTWP was created in 2010 as the first step of a phased approach for the establishment of a Caribbean Tsunami Warning Center.

“The vulnerability to human life from earthquakes continues to increase. The interface between science and the protection of life,” says von Hillebrandt-Andrade, “depends upon our continued progress in understanding the processes at work. The current fiscal situation poses a great challenge to that progress.”



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As the former Puerto Rico Seismic Network Director (1990-2010) and as a member of the University of Puerto Rico Geology Department, von Hillebrandt-Andrade provided key leadership in the modernization, restructuring, staffing and funding of the seismic network to provide earthquake and tsunami monitoring, warning and education services. Her experience in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean and South America has afforded her a unique familiarity with a variety of natural hazards such as volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis.

The author and co-author of more than 50 journal papers and abstracts on earthquakes and tsunamis, Professor von Hillebrandt-Andrade has also served on the Puerto Rico Earthquake Safety Commission and the Puerto Rico Tsunami Technical Review Committee. She is a member of the Seismological Society of America, the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, the American Geophysical Union and Geological Society of Puerto Rico. The Seismological Society members twice elected her as a director (2007 and 2010) and as Vice President of the Society (2009).

Since 2005, she has been a member of the United States delegations to the UNESCO meetings on tsunamis and the oceans. In 2010 she was elected Vice-Chair of the UNESCO IOC Intergovernmental Group on Tsunami and Other Coastal Hazards Warning System for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions -- encompassing over 40 nations in the Caribbean and America.

Upon graduation as a geologist of the University of Delaware, von Hillebrandt-Andrade went to Quito, Ecuador as a Fulbright Scholar (1984-1986) and received a master's degree in Geology from the Escuela Politécnica Nacional. She played an important role in monitoring the active volcanoes of this Andean county and co-authored its first volcanic hazard maps as a Research Engineer with the Nacional's Geophysical Institute (1987-1990).

von Hillebrandt-Andrade succeeds Rick Aster, professor of geophysics at New Mexico Tech, as president of SSA. Founded in 1906 in San Francisco, SSA now has members throughout the world representing a variety of technical interests: seismologists and other geophysicists, geologists, engineers, insurers, and policy-makers in preparedness and safety.

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