



**THE EXPLORATION MUSEUM
HÚSAVÍK, ICELAND**

ANNOUNCES THE

2020 LEIF ERIKSON AWARDS

Canadian George Kourounis, and

Americans Ulyana Horodyskyj and Jeff Blumenfeld, and

Scottish Company Skyrora Recognized

HUSAVIK, Iceland (August 18, 2020) – The sixth annual Leif Erikson Exploration Awards, sponsored by the Exploration Museum, this weekend recognized Canadian George Kourounis, and Americans Ulyana N. Horodyskyj and Jeff Blumenfeld. Also recognized was Scottish private space company Skyrora that launched their Skylark rocket from Langanes near Húsavík in northern Iceland on Aug. 16.

The **Leif Erikson Awards**, also known as the Exploration Awards, are awarded annually by the Exploration Museum for achievements in exploration and for work in the field of exploration history.

The awards ceremony was held Aug. 15 in Húsavík, the main and final event of the annual Húsavík Explorers Festival.

The Leif Erikson Exploration Award, recognizing an explorer for a recent or a lifetime achievement in the field of exploration, goes to George Kourounis, Toronto, Ontario, who explores and documents extreme natural events, working with scientists or local experts. He has also documented many forms of severe weather, including tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards, floods, hail, and lightning.

The Leif Erikson Young Explorer Award, awarded to an explorer under the age of 35 for great achievements in exploration, goes to Dr. Ulyana Horodyskyj, Broomfield, Colorado, recognized for her work as a science communicator. Horodyskyj is passionate about inspiring others to become involved in glaciology, geology and astronomy. She is the founder of Science in the Wild, bringing citizen-scientists into the field.

The Leif Erikson Exploration History Award, which recognizes a person or an organization that has worked to promote and preserve exploration history, was bestowed upon Jeff Blumenfeld, editor and publisher of Expedition News, who for 26 years has chronicled both worldwide expeditions and adventures.

Blumenfeld, from Boulder, Colorado, has devoted his career to documenting exploration and helping new explorers gain funding. He is a longtime Fellow of The Explorers Club and served as the club's communication director. His books include *Get Sponsored: A Funding Guide for Explorers, Adventurers and Would-Be World Travelers*, and *Travel With Purpose: A Field Guide to Voluntourism*.

Skyrora Ltd., a private space company from Scotland founded in 2017, received the **Leif Erikson Lunar Prize** for their work developing innovative high-grade fuel made from waste plastics designed to minimize the environmental impact of rocket launches.

Previous winners include American Apollo 17 astronaut Harrison Schmitt, Australian around-the-world sailor Jessica Watson, American planetary scientist Carolyn Porco, and British exploration historian Dr. Huw Lewis-Jones.

The museum is located in the town of Húsavík on the northern coast of Iceland, 30 miles from the Arctic Circle. It is dedicated to the history of human exploration, from the early explorers to the exploration of space. Husavik is featured in the Will Ferrell film *Eurovision: The Story of Fire Saga*, currently streaming on Netflix.

The awards are named for Icelandic explorer Leif Erikson, considered the first European to land in North America and who, according to the Sagas of Icelanders, established the first Norse settlement at Vinland, tentatively identified

with the Norse L'Anse aux Meadows on the northern tip of Newfoundland in modern-day Canada.

For more information: www.explorationmuseum.com

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