Sarah-Jane Barnes received her BSc (Hons) in 1975 at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, and her MSc at the University of Cape Town, South Africa (1978). She moved to the University of Toronto as a PhD candidate in 1979 under the direction of Prof. A.J. Naldrett. Since 1986 she has taught and carried out research on magmatic ore deposits and igneous petrology at the Universite du Quebec - Chicoutimi. Her continued ascent to national and international prominence was recognized when she was granted a Tier I Canada Research Chair in Magmatic Metallogeny.

Sarah-Jane Barnes has worked for over two decades on the nature and origin of PGE-Ni-Cu-Au mineralization associated with mafic magmas, both in Canada and abroad. Along with her colleagues, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, she has set the standard for exhaustive, thorough, and in-depth studies of the petrology, mineralogy, and geochemistry of many of the classic sites for magmatic ore deposits, including the Bushveld Complex, the J-M Reef of the Stillwater Complex, the famed Norilsk area, the Rana Intrusion, the Duluth Complex, and the Abitibi and Cape Smith greenstone belts. This work, summarized in over 80 international peer-reviewed articles, has advanced significantly our understanding of the factors involved in generating some of the most significant resources on the planet.