FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Great Minds in STEM Announces 2022 HENAAC Award Winners

Los Angeles, CA – GMiS is proud to announce the HENAAC Award Winners for 2022! Over 60 companies, government agencies, academic institutions and our Nation’s uniformed services collectively nominated hundreds of outstanding candidates. Selection Committee Chairs Dr. Yannis Yortsos, Dean, Viterbi School of Engineering at the University of Southern California and Dr. Emily Allen, Dean, College of Engineering, Computer Science and Technology at California State University, Los Angeles and the over 50 STEM professionals who participated in the peer-review selection process, had a difficult task to select the best of the best for this year’s class of HENAAC honorees.

2022 has been filled with many unknowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic impacting all areas of our lives, and employers and organizations large and small could have been forgiven for de-prioritizing recognition efforts. But that didn’t happen. This year’s nominating class is one of the largest and most robust in recent memory – a testament to our stakeholders’ commitment to GMiS and to diversity and inclusion.

All honorees will be recognized during the 34th Annual GMiS Conference, October 5 - 8, 2022, in Pasadena, CA. Stay connected to GMiS social media for information about the programs and platforms that will feature our honorees, and to learn more about their professional experiences, life journeys, and community engagement.

Engineer of the Year
Fernando Signorini
Vice President Operations
U.S. Gulf Coast;
Site Director Texas Operations;
President & CEO Union Carbide
Corporation

Scientist of the Year
Kimberly Kukurba, Ph.D.
Associate Director & Fellow,
Data Science & Applied
AI/ML Products
Raytheon Missiles & Defense
Raytheon Technologies

Chairman’s Award
(Posthumous)
Diana Natalicio, Ph.D.
President Emeritus
University of Texas at El Paso
– 1989 to 2019

Executive Excellence
RADM David Goggins
Program Executive Officer for
Attack Submarines
United States Navy

Lifetime Achievement
Luz E. Virgen
Reliability Engineering Manager
Virgin Galactic
“Nominated by and formally of
The Boeing Company”

Lifetime Achievement
Edgar Yzquierdo
Technical Codes &
Standards Team Lead
Chevron Corporation
Outstanding Technical Achievement - National Lab
Frank W. Delrio, Ph.D.
Principal Member of the Technical Staff
Research & Development Science & Engineering
Materials Science
Sandia National Laboratories

Outstanding Technical Achievement - Government
Macarena P. Parra, Ph.D.
Instrumentation & Engineering Technology Research 7
development
Technical Area Lead
NASA Ames Research Center

Outstanding Technical Achievement - Industry
Diego Cristancho, Ph.D.
Research Scientist
Dow

Professional Achievement Level II
Imelda E. Siegelson
Lead Industrial Engineer
General Motors

Professional Achievement Level II
Ricardo Garcia de Alba
Global Senior Business Director, Enlist & Core Herbicides
Corteva Agriscience

Professional Achievement Level I – Government
Diana Santiago De Jesus
Research Materials Engineer
NASA Glenn Research Center

Professional Achievement Level I – Industry
Douglas W. Orellana, Ph.D., CSEP, OCSMP, ITIL4, SPC5
Vice President of Intelligent Systems Engineering, Innovation and Capabilities Office
ManTech International Corporation

Most Promising Scientist or Engineer – Ph.D.
Olga Reyes Valdes, Ph.D.
Project Topsides HSSE Lead
Shell USA, Inc.
Press Release
August 4, 2022

Most Promising Scientist or Engineer - Ph.D.  
Nayomi Z. Plaza, Ph.D.  
Materials Research Engineer, Forest Biopolymer Science & Engineering  
U.S. Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Most Promising Scientist or Engineer – Master’s  
Anthony Lopez  
Senior Energy Researcher  
National Renewable Energy Laboratory

Most Promising Scientist or Engineer – Master’s  
Nathalie Quintero  
Operations Lead, Artemis Core Stage 1  
The Boeing Company

Most Promising Scientist or Engineer – Bachelor’s  
Erwin Morales  
Principal Engineer Mission Assurance  
Northrop Grumman

Most Promising Scientist or Engineer – Bachelor’s  
Jose J. Colon-Rodriguez  
Graduate Research Assistant  
West Virginia University

Education  
Adeeba A. Raheem, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, Department of Civil Engineering  
University of Texas at El Paso

Education  
Justin F. Vazquez Poritz, Ph.D.  
Dean, School of Arts and Sciences  
New York City College of Technology, CUNY

Community Service  
Abigail McFiggins  
Hardware Engineering Manager  
Lockheed Martin Corporation
About the Organization

Great Minds in STEM™ is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to keeping America technologically strong by promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) careers, especially in underserved communities. Established in 1989 and based in the Los Angeles area, the organization’s nation-wide programming focuses on STEM educational awareness from pre-college through college, and on recognizing and documenting the world-class contributions of Hispanic professionals in STEM to serve as role models for the next generation of American engineers and scientists.

The GMiS Conference is the organization’s flagship event where all elements of outreach and programming come together to celebrate excellence in STEM. The conference features executive forums, seminars, competitive programs, career opportunities and networking sessions and is attended by over 3,000 STEM students and professionals annually.

Great Minds in STEM is once again partnering with the Computing Alliance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (CASHI) in 2022, which has chosen the GMiS Conference as the venue for their annual CAHSI Summit.

For more information about Great Minds in STEM and the 2022 GMiS Conference, please visit us online at:

www.greatmindsinstem.org #GMiSTEM22

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