

# Press Release

August 4, 2022

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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  
Dow



**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

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## 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**

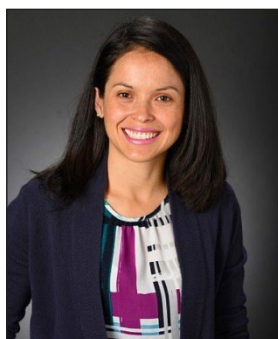
Research Materials Engineer  
NASA Glenn Research Center



## Professional Achievement Level I – Industry

**Douglas W. Orellana, Ph.D.**

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.

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### Most Promising Scientist or Engineer - Ph.D.

**Nayomi Z. Plaza, Ph.D.**

Materials Research Engineer  
Forest Products Lab  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
U.S. Forest Service



### Most Promising Scientist or Engineer – Master’s

**Anthony Lopez**

Senior Energy Researcher  
Geospatial Data Science Division  
National Renewable Energy  
Laboratory  
U.S. Department of Energy



### 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  
Strategic Space Systems Division  
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.**

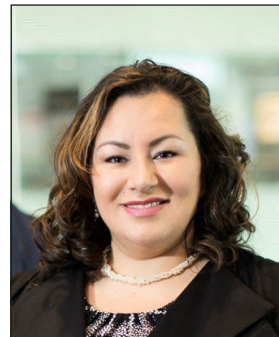
Assistant Professor, Department of  
Civil Engineering  
University of Texas at El Paso



### 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

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## Community Service

### Javier Garcia

ACE Project Director  
21st Century Community Learning  
Centers – Afterschool Centers on  
Education (ACE) Program  
Communities In Schools of Cameron  
County

## 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](http://www.greatmindsinstem.org)

[#GMiSTEM22](https://twitter.com/GreatMindsSTEM)



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