

August 22, 2024

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

# Great Minds in STEM Announces HENAAC Award Winners for 2024

*Washington, DC, August 22, 2024* – Great Minds in STEM is proud to unveil our 2024 HENAAC Award Winners! Established in 1989 to honor Hispanic engineers, scientists and technology professionals and highlight their world-class contributions to the STEM fields, the HENAAC Awards have become synonymous with excellence. As a true peer-review distinction, a HENAAC Award distinguishes the honoree as among the best and brightest in their field, and the Class of 2024 more than meets the highest standards these prestigious awards.

As in each previous year, the 36th class of honorees emerged from the rigorous, peer-review independent Selection Committee, chaired this year by the deans and senior leaders of the schools of engineering and/or science at our academic host institutions: The University of Texas at Dallas; the University of Texas at Arlington; and Dallas College. The Selection Committee reviewed nominees from dozens of companies, national laboratories, government agencies, academic institutions and our nation's uniformed services on their way toward finalizing the 2024 slate of professional honorees.

All GMiS professional honorees will be honored at the 36th annual GMiS Conference, "Answering the Call," November 6-9, 2024 in Fort Worth, Texas. The HENAAC Awards Show is scheduled for Saturday, November 9th, at the Fort Worth Convention Center.



**ENGINEER OF THE YEAR**

**Clara Rivero Baleine, Ph.D.**

Lockheed Martin Fellow  
Lockheed Martin Corporation



**SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR**

**Rui Vogt Alves da Cruz, Ph.D.**

Vice President, Core R&D  
Dow

**EXECUTIVE EXCELLENCE**

**Francisco Flores**

Vice President, Production  
Engineering & Operations  
Northrop Grumman Corporation

**OUTSTANDING TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT**

**Katherine I. Meza, Ph.D.**

Associate Technical Fellow  
Configuration Management  
and Product Integration Engineer  
The Boeing Company

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT**

**Tabare Abadie, Ph.D.**

Senior Research Manager &  
Distinguished Laureate, Seed Product  
Development Recruiting Lead  
Corteva Agriscience

**CHAIRMAN'S AWARD**

**The Society of Hispanic  
Professional Engineers**

**SANTIAGO RODRIGUEZ DIVERSITY AWARD**

**Maria C. Lopez Coles**

Deputy Executive Director  
Ames Exchange  
NASA Ames Research Center

**PIONEER AWARD**

**Anna Mellado Park**

CEO  
Mellado-Castañeda Family Office

# Press Release

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## GMiS Announces HENAAC Award Winners for 2024 (continued)

### PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT II

#### Jorge Lopez, Ph.D.

Manager Subsurface Technology &  
Senior Principal Geophysicist  
Shell Brasil

### PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT I

#### Maria Cardwell

Senior Director, Vehicle Engineering  
*Formerly of the*  
Northrop Grumman Corporation

### ENTREPRENEUR

#### Will Gaviria Rojas, Ph.D.

Co-Founder  
Coactive AI

### MOST PROMISING ENGINEER, PH.D.

#### Claudia Moreno Chicunque, Ph.D.

Staff Engineer  
Guidance Navigation & Control  
Northrop Grumman Corporation

### MOST PROMISING SCIENTIST, PH.D.

#### Mauricio Tano-Retamales, Ph.D.

Modeling and Simulation Scientist  
Idaho National Laboratory

### MOST PROMISING ENGINEER, MASTER'S DEGREE

#### Monica Ochoa Porter

Human Engineering Lead, Flight Crew  
Integration, CST-100 Starliner  
The Boeing Company

### MOST PROMISING ENGINEER, UNDERGRAD DEGREE

#### Karina Quintana

System Engineer  
Digital Communications and RF Payload  
The Boeing Company

### COMMUNITY SERVICE

#### Marjorie Blanco

Engineering Product Lifecycle Manager  
The Boeing Company

## GMiS Acknowledges and thanks our 2024 Selection Committee Chairs

#### Stephanie G. Adams, Ph.D.

Dean and Lars Magnus Ericsson Chair  
Erik Jonsson School of Engineering  
and Computer Science  
The University of Texas at Dallas

#### Peter E. Crouch, Ph.D.

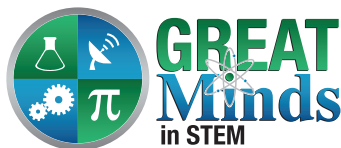
Dean, College of Engineering  
The University of Texas at Arlington

#### Morteza G. Khaledi, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Science  
The University of Texas at Arlington

#### Ragunath Kanakala, Ph.D.

Vice Provost  
School of Engineering, Technology,  
Mathematics, and Sciences  
Dallas College



**About Great Minds in STEM (GMiS):** Great Minds in STEM is a national nonprofit organization established in 1989 to inspire, support, and recognize students and professionals, especially those from underserved communities, in order to expand and strengthen America's talent pool of Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Medical (STEMM) professionals. For 36 years, GMiS has pioneered programs and initiatives that have helped build a STEMM workforce that fully reflects the rich diversity of our nation, including in-classroom pre-college engagement, college scholarships, academic advocacy, professional partnerships, and national recognition events.



**About the GMiS Conference:** Great Minds in STEM's annual Conference is the organization's flagship event. First held in 1989 in Houston, Texas, and renewed every year since, the conference features executive forums, seminars, competitive programs, networking sessions, and an all-day Career and Graduate School fair. The 4-day event is attended by over 3,000 STEM students and professionals annually and will culminate with the HENAAC Awards Show Saturday, November 9th at the Fort Worth Convention Center. 2024 will mark the first GMiS Conference to be held in the city of Fort Worth, and the first conference in Texas since 2008.

For media inquiries about honorees, please contact: Peter Mellado, Director of Recognition Events, at [pmellado@greatmindsinstem.org](mailto:pmellado@greatmindsinstem.org)

Note to editors: High-resolution photos of the GMiS logo are available upon request

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