



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Great Minds in STEM Announces STEM Hero and Luminary Award Winners for 2024

Washington, DC, August 22, 2024 – Great Minds in STEM is proud to announce the outstanding STEM professionals selected to receive Luminary and STEM Hero Awards in 2024!

Luminary Award recipients are remarkable engineers, scientists and technology professionals who represent corporate and government agencies from multiple industries and sectors. This distinction honors their achievements leading, collaborating and initiating key programs and research in their respective fields.

The STEM Hero Awards honor professionals from at the many agencies, research laboratories and technical commands that fall under the direction of either the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security.

All Luminary and STEM Hero honorees emerged from the highly competitive HENAAC Award peer-review selection process. This year, the Selection Committee recommended six STEM Heroes and 24 Luminaries join the class of 2024 professional honorees. All honorees will receive their awards at the 2024 GMiS Conference, “Answering the Call,” November 6-9, 2024, in Fort Worth, Texas.



2024 STEM Hero Award Winners

LTC Rebecca B. Williams
ARMY FUTURES COMMAND
U.S. ARMY

Dr. Nivia Colón-Díaz
AIR FORCE RESEARCH LABORATORY
U.S. AIR FORCE

TSgt Aaron R. Rasch
SHEPPARD AIR FORCE BASE
U.S. AIR FORCE

Thomas J. Bueno
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
U.S. ARMY

Christopher J. Casillas
AIR FORCE LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT CENTER
U.S. AIR FORCE

MSgt Therrion A. Grooms
LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE
U.S. AIR FORCE

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Press Release

August 22, 2024



2024 Luminary Award Winners

Karen Abarca
NORTHROP GRUMMAN

Juliana Serafim Francisco
DOW

Veronica G. Melesse Vergara
OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY

Claribel Acevedo-Velez, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO, MAYAGÜEZ

Joann Naim Gerena
LOCKHEED MARTIN

Jose G. Mendez
NASA GLENN RESEARCH CENTER

Almaris Alonso-Claudio, Ph.D.
U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Daniela Gil
LOCKHEED MARTIN

Felipe Polo-Garzon, Ph.D.
OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY

Samantha Corriero
BOEING

Alejandro Lerza
CHEVRON

Gabriel Ruscalleda
CHEVRON

Rachid Darbali-Zamora, Ph.D.
SANDIA NATIONAL LABORATORIES

Miguel Matta
LOCKHEED MARTIN

Glenda Valero de Silano
CHEVRON

Gustavo E. Delcampo
RAYTHEON/RTX

Kyle A. McDonald, Ph.D.
DOW

Adriana Velasquez
SHELL USA, INC.

Joshua D. Easley
RAYTHEON/RTX

Laura Medina, D.C.Sc
RAYTHEON/RTX

Victor Zapata
DOW



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

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

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