



## Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation

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### SEVEN RECEIVE 2011 LIFE SCIENCES AWARDS

*A Professor from Case Western Reserve University; three High School Educators from Florida, Maryland, and North Carolina; and three High School Life Sciences Students from Texas, Kansas and Florida, Receive \$90,000 in Monetary Awards*

**July 11, 2011, Washington, D.C.** – On July 11, the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce will hold the fourth annual *Life Sciences Awards* presenting \$90,000 in monetary awards at a luncheon ceremony in Washington, D.C. The Foundation and U.S. Chamber, in a public-private partnership, sponsor the *Life Sciences Awards* to recognize Americans who exemplify excellence in life sciences. The competition is open to scientists, educators and high school students around the country.

#### Awards

***\$25,000 Chairmen's Distinguished Life Sciences Scientist Award*** – **Melissa Knothe Tate, Ph.D.**, Professor of Biomedical Engineering, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH. Dr. Knothe Tate is an internationally recognized leader in the fields of orthopaedic mechanobiology as well as the development and clinical translation of novel technologies and materials. Dr. Knothe Tate's work involves studying the mechanobiology of living cells and how stresses, strains and mechanical forces affect cell signaling, differentiation, etc. This expands understanding of bone healing and supports development of synthetic tissues. Dr. Knothe Tate will also receive up to \$25,000 in research funds.

***\$10,000 Life Sciences Educator Award*** – **Deborah Wasylik**, Life Sciences Educator, Dr. Phillips High School, Orlando, FL. Creating curiosity in science class is important to Deborah Wasylik. She accomplishes this when she tells her students that before she became a teacher she had climbed inside a pyramid, jumped out of an airplane and sold drugs! She was a pharmaceutical sales rep. For the last 10 years she has enjoyed teaching life sciences at Dr. Phillips High School. Deborah has been the recipient of many awards including being selected last year as a NASA Endeavor STEM Fellow and previously received the Presidential Award of Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching from President Bush at the White House.

***\$10,000 Life Sciences Educator Award*** – **Coit Hendley**, Chemistry Educator, Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Greenbelt, MD. Mr. Hendley has been teaching for 32 years, and currently teaches AP Chemistry and Research Practicum. The AP Chemistry program he developed has been recognized by the College Board since 2006 for having the most number of African-American students with a score of 3 or better. A National Board Certified grant writer, Coit has received many grants used to fund such projects as the Watershed Integrated Study Program, in which teams of students measure the water quality of fourteen sites in the area and use the data to study local and general water quality.

***\$10,000 Life Sciences Educator Award*** – **Leslie Brinson**, Biology Educator, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, Durham, North Carolina. A teacher for 30 years, Leslie has been teaching at the NCSSM since 1995, and has come to believe that there is no better educational environment than NCSSM. In this residential setting, students are provided a competitive and nurturing pedagogical setting to conduct their own research and pursue a myriad of science competitions within North Carolina and beyond. The highlight of the school year is when she leads students to Belize where they are immersed in research projects on the coral reef. Inspired by her colleagues, Leslie has also enthusiastically embraced a key mission of the school - providing outreach to biology teachers throughout the State.

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***\$5,000 Life Sciences Student Award*** - Amy Chyao, Senior, Plano East Senior High School, Plano, TX. Amy became intrigued by science in the first grade. Inspired by Marie Curie's dedication to discoveries and scientific contributions, Amy was determined to follow her example. Amy's passion for science led her to a unique opportunity offered by the University of Texas at Dallas. She joined the 2009 Nano-Explorers summer program and stepped into the intricate world of nanotechnology. Her passion for science propelled her to work hard and to excel as she continues to work toward becoming a next generation scientist. In 2010, she was the winner of the first Gordon Moore Award at the Intel ISEF. She also had the honor to attend President Obama's 2011 State of the Union Address.

***\$5,000 Life Sciences Student Award*** - Kayla Dowell, Junior, Germann Hills Christian School, Manhattan, KS. In just the last three years, Kayla Dowell has become proficient in the use of near-infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) technique which measures the traits of biological materials. Kayla learned about NIRS as a student volunteer with the USDA Agricultural Research Service. In 2009, Kayla used her NIRS skills at a malaria research lab in Tanzania, Africa, conducting research on mosquitoes that transmit malaria. In 2010, at a medical clinic at an orphanage in Zimbabwe, she showed that NIRS could be used to determine artemisinin content in extracts of a local plant, *Artemisia annua*, which is used to cure malaria. This research could be used to rapidly evaluate new cultivars of this important cure for a disease that kills over 1 million people each year. Her research has prompted further studies by scientists in the Tanzania, Kenya and Nigeria.

***\$5,000 Life Sciences Student Award*** - Christopher Duncan-Lewis, Senior, Winter Springs High School, Winter Springs, FL. From a young age, Christopher has shown interest in the medicine and health sciences. Excelling in science courses, Christopher undertook a significant research project during his junior and senior high school years. Christopher believes his research on the harmful effects of certain compounds on the sense of smell provide evidence against the use of such compounds in the nasal passage, and have the potential to increase our understanding of the sense of smell. His research report has been accepted for publication in *Comparative Medicine*: a medical journal. A National Achievement Scholar, AP Scholar, and AXA Achievement Scholar, in addition to many other awards, Christopher won a second prize in medicine and health at the 2011 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. Christopher will attend the University of Pennsylvania in the Fall, majoring in biochemistry.

The Foundation was established by Congress in 1992 to encourage and promote new discoveries, and this mission is accomplished through the sponsorship of programs such as the ***Life Sciences Awards***. The U.S. Chamber strongly supports American industry dedicated to protecting human health through testing, manufacturing and marketing of biomedical products. With these goals in mind, the Foundation and the Chamber forged its public-private partnership.

On Monday, July 11, the Foundation and the Chamber will present the seven awards at an award ceremony from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Headquarters, 1615 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. The event, ***Discovery Through Innovation: Science in Action***, explores the importance of advances in life sciences and biomedical research to America's health.

### **Sponsors**

The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation is an independent Federal government agency established by Congress in 1992 to "encourage and support research, study and labor designed to produce new discoveries in all fields of endeavor for the benefit of mankind." The Foundation has created ***Frontiers of Discovery-Work in Progress and Discover the Future*** programs that honor "cutting edge" innovations and innovative ideas of America's youth and educators. For more information, please visit: [www.columbusfdn.org](http://www.columbusfdn.org) or contact Judi Shellenberger at (315) 258-0090.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation, representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region. More than 96 percent of the Chamber's members are small businesses with 100 or fewer employees, 70 percent of which have 10 or fewer employees. Yet, virtually all of the nation's largest companies are also active members. We are particularly cognizant of the problems of smaller businesses, as well as issues facing the business community at large.