



Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation

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FOUR RECEIVE 2012 LIFE SCIENCES AWARDS

A Professor from the University of Georgia; a High School Educator from Virginia; and two High School Life Sciences Students from California and Virginia Receive \$17,000 in Monetary Awards

July 16, 2012, Washington, D.C. – On July 19, the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce will hold the Fifth Annual ***Life Sciences Awards*** presenting \$17,000 in monetary awards at a morning ceremony in Washington, D.C. The Foundation and the 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 researchers/scientists, educators and high school students around the country working in the field of life sciences.

"Four exceptional people are being honored here today," said Dr. Maria Lombardo, Chair of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation. "Each has made a unique contribution to the world. Addressing topics and concerns that affect people in their communities and worldwide, we applaud their forethought, hard work and dedication," Lombardo said.

"The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has long recognized that this country faces a shortage in talent in the scientific fields," said Randel K. Johnson, Senior Vice President, Labor, Immigration and Employee Benefits at the U.S. Chamber. "Today's event, jointly held by the Chamber and Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation, encourages the development of students and educators who wish to dedicate themselves to making outstanding contributions in this area. We therefore congratulate the honorees on their achievements," Johnson said.

Awards

\$10,000 Distinguished Life Science Award - **Daniel G. Colley, Ph.D.**, Professor of Microbiology and Director of the Center for Tropical and Emerging Global Diseases, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia. Dr. Colley is a renowned scientist most notably in the area of tropical medicine and parasitology, with a main focus on the immunology of schistosomiasis, a debilitating, chronic worm disease that affects 240 million people worldwide, in order to control and eliminate it.

\$5,000 Life Sciences Educator Award - Camilla Walck, Ph.D., International Baccalaureate Biology Teacher, Princess Anne High School, Virginia Beach, Virginia. For the past 17 years, Dr. Walck has worked for the City of Virginia Beach Public Schools. Dedicated to teaching and learning both in and out of the classroom, her passion for biology is contagious - engaging and exciting her students to learn about the scientific world. A National Board Certified teacher, an adjunct professor at Virginia Wesleyan College, and an international evaluator for International Baccalaureate (IB) biology, Dr. Walck was selected as one of six teachers to visit Cardiff, England to collaborate on the IB grading process.

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\$1,000 Life Sciences Student Award - Vaishnavi Rao, Junior, Canyon Crest Academy, San Diego, California. Vaishnavi's passion and love for science, especially for neuroscience and the brain, began in elementary school. Most recently, her pioneering research on neurotransmitter plasticity at the University of California, San Diego, has been recognized as having far reaching applicability in potential therapies targeting neurological disorders such as stroke, Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy and Parkinson's disease. Her work has received tremendous recognition at local, State as well as International (Intel ISEF) Science Fairs. Recently, she also won the San Diego Brain Bee 2012 and placed 6th overall at the USA National Brain Bee competitions held in Baltimore, Maryland.

\$1,000 Life Sciences Student Award - Justin Roth, Sophomore, West Branch High School, West Branch, Iowa. Taking accelerated math and science classes beginning in elementary school, Justin joined an extra-curricular science club in middle school. As a result of the science club projects he has been involved in, three ordinances have been introduced in the town of West Branch, three bills have been introduced to the Iowa State Legislature (with one being passed), and West Branch High School has started saving \$10,000 annually on its energy costs. Justin has also worked with his church to help establish a community clothes pantry to enable those in need to receive clothes and school supplies at no cost to them. He also volunteers in packaging many shipments of food to Africa and Haiti through Kids Against Hunger. In addition, Justin enjoys participating in his high school's extra-curricular activities. He plays football and wrestles and plays trombone in the marching, concert, jazz, and show choir bands.

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 Thursday, July 19, the Foundation and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce will host a Discussion on "Preparing for the Future: Personalized Medicine in the 21st Century". The event will be held at the Chamber Headquarters, 1615 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. beginning at 9:30 a.m. and is open to the public. Immediately following, the Foundation and the Chamber will present the four ***Life Sciences Awards*** at an awards ceremony. Please visit: <http://www.uschamber.com/events/preparing-future-personalized-medicine-21st-century-featuring-5th-annual-life-sciences-awards>.

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 scientists/ researchers, youth and educators. For more information, please visit: 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 the interests of 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. # # #