



Touch wonder.

[home](#) > [newsroom](#) > [press releases](#) > 05.29.07



Press Releases

TICKETS

EXHIBITS

SHOWS

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Get Involved

Members & Donors

For Educators

Community Programs

Newsroom

About Us

MAY 29 2007

For more information:

Todd Scott - Himmelrich, Inc.
410-528-5400
Todd@Himmelrich.com

*Maryland Science Center Bestows OYS and OYE Awards
Hopkins researchers to be recognized at June 15 ceremony*

Two Johns Hopkins researchers will be awarded the annual Outstanding Young Scientist (OYS) and Outstanding Young Engineer (OYE) honors by the Maryland Science Center at a Friday, June 15, 2007 ceremony, announced Maryland Science Center President and CEO Van Reiner.

Dr. Joshua Mendell, assistant professor of Pediatrics at The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine will be named Outstanding Young Scientist (OYS), and David Gracias, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at The Johns Hopkins University, will be awarded the Outstanding Young Engineer (OYE) designation.

The OYS and OYE awards recognize the extraordinary scientific contributions of Maryland residents under the age of 35. The OYS award, originally presented by the Maryland Academy of Sciences (the precursor to, and legal name of, the Maryland Science Center), was reinstated in 2006 as part of the 30th anniversary of the Maryland Science Center. The OYE award was reinstated this year.

"The OYE and OYS awards are an important part of the Maryland Science Center's mission to encourage young people to explore careers in science, and to inspire others by recognizing that young scientists have the potential to make fascinating discoveries and important contributions to their field," said Van Reiner.

Dr. Mendell and Dr. Gracias were selected for their awards by members of Maryland Science Center's Scientific Council, the 50-member advisory group providing expertise and content review to the institution. As recipients of the awards, both will receive a cash prize of \$2,500 and the Allan C. Davis Medal.

Dr. Mendell's research focuses on a recently described class of small regulatory RNAs known as microRNAs. Accumulating evidence demonstrates that these molecules play essential roles in normal physiology and are commonly dysregulated in human disease states such as cancer. He has published 10 peer reviewed publications, seven reviews and book chapters, and holds one patent.

"Dr. Mendell proved himself to be a highly creative, independent and rigorous investigator," wrote Dr. Hal Dietz, Professor of Medicine and Genetics at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, in his nomination of Mendell. "He has extended his track record of outstanding scientific success as an independent principal investigator. He has already made major contributions to our understanding of the regulation and function of MicroRNAs."

Dr. Gracias' research is focused on developing new methods to fabricate microscopic medical devices. Since the role of interfaces becomes extremely important as the size of the system decreases, he utilizes state-of-the-art experimental tools in surface

science to probe interfacial phenomena at the molecular scale. Dr. Gracias, the 2006 Camille-Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar award recipient, has written 28 journal papers, seven peer reviewed conference papers, holds 14 patents with five patents pending, and has been awarded 12 research grants throughout his career.

"Professor Gracias' work combines deep fundamental insights into interfaces of biological and technical significance, and an imaginative flair for the possibilities afforded by creating three-dimensional, self-assembled, responsive devices," noted Kathleen J. Stebe, Professor and Chair of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at The Johns Hopkins University.

Past recipients of the Outstanding Young Scientist award include William D. Phillips, who received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1997 for his work at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and Jeremy Burg, currently the head of the National Institutes of General Medical Sciences at the National Institute of Health.

The Maryland Science Center stimulates and cultivates awareness, interest and understanding of science through exciting interactive experiences and educational programming. More than 500,000 people visit the Inner Harbor location each year, where they learn about the Earth and the environment and are awed by over a dozen of life-size dinosaurs in Dinosaur Mysteries, explore a day in the life of the human body in Your Body: The Inside Story, experiment with dozens of interactive activities in Newton's Alley, thrill to adventure in the five-story St. John Properties IMAX Theater, travel through space in the Davis Planetarium, and engage their younger children in the Kids Room. The Maryland Science Center reaches an additional 100,000 Maryland residents each year with its interactive programs delivered at schools, community centers, and public events.

[back to top](#)

[Partners](#) | [Support Maryland Science Center](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

©2005, Maryland Science Center | 601 Light Street, Baltimore, MD 21230

24 Hour Information Line: 410-685-5225 | Talk to a Science Center Operator: 410-685-2370