




SAMUEL J. HEYMAN
SERVICE *to* AMERICA MEDALS

*Celebrating the passion, leadership and impact of
our nation's dedicated public servants.*



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE





Welcome to the 17th annual Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals—the premier celebration of our nation’s outstanding civil servants. We are excited to assemble tonight bipartisan leaders from government, industry, academia and philanthropy who are united in the pursuit of a more innovative and effective government that meets the needs of the American people.

The 2018 Sammies winners have made important contributions to the health, safety and prosperity of people in the U.S. and around the world by: identifying a new class of rare genetic diseases and finding treatments to alleviate the suffering of thousands of patients; collecting and analyzing critical data on the mosquito-borne Zika virus to help protect women and babies in the U.S. and its territories; and pioneering research to understand the prevalence of developmental disabilities, which has influenced the expansion of services for children with autism and other conditions.

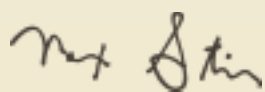
Other award recipients brought justice for hundreds of thousands of people defrauded by money transfer scams who now have a way to recoup their financial losses; built online tools for veterans to access benefits and services more easily; provided electricity to more than 50 million people in sub-Saharan Africa while creating export opportunities for U.S. companies; and designed a traffic-management system for the large-scale use of aerial drones.

We are pleased to introduce a new award this year to recognize individuals outside government who have made significant contributions to public service and the public good. We seek to draw attention to the many ways government, business and other partners work together to address our nation’s most pressing challenges. We will present the first Sammies Spirit of Service award to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos to recognize the many ways he and his companies advance important fields such as space exploration and national security, and help government deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

The Partnership thanks the nominators, selection committee members, sponsors and supporters who make it possible to honor the Sammies finalists and award winners. We especially thank our premier and national sponsors—Mrs. Ronnie F. Heyman and family, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Chevron, and Ingeborg and Ira Leon Rennert.

We believe you will leave here in awe of what these federal employees have achieved. We hope you will share their stories and will be inspired to find and celebrate other top performers in our government. Creating a culture of recognition contributes to more effective government and helps our public servants find new and important ways to improve the lives of Americans.

Signed,





SAMUEL J. HEYMAN (1939–2009)
FOUNDER, PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE



A respected business leader and visionary philanthropist, Samuel J. Heyman believed in the power of good government and the inextricable link between performance and talent.

Mr. Heyman founded the Partnership for Public Service to revitalize our federal government and to inspire a new generation to serve. The Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals program is named in memory of his extraordinary contributions.

Like tonight's remarkable honorees, Mr. Heyman answered the call to national service. As a young Harvard Law School graduate, he joined the Justice Department under then Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., where he served as chief assistant U.S. attorney in his home state of Connecticut.

Following his father's death five years later, he left government to run the family real estate development business. Despite the premature end to his government career, Mr. Heyman's experience as a federal employee instilled within him a lifelong passion for public service. He founded the Partnership in 2001 and supported public service fellowships at Harvard Law School, Yale Law School and Seton Hall School of Law. He also founded The Samuel and Ronnie Heyman Center for Ethics, Public Policy and the Professions at Duke University. For his exceptional commitment, President George W. Bush presented him with the Presidential Citizens Medal in 2008.

The Partnership benefited tremendously from his leadership, and is grateful for the continued support of the Heyman family and their friends. The organization honors Mr. Heyman's ongoing legacy by striving to create a federal government that effectively serves the American people. The Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals pay tribute to the talented and dedicated public servants who collectively reflect Mr. Heyman's vision for excellence in government.





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Feature Writer
The New York Times





2018 FINALISTS



In addition to tonight's award winners, we are proud to celebrate all 27 finalists and more than 300 nominees for the 2018 [Sammies](#). They represent hundreds of thousands of federal workers who deserve our support and appreciation for their exemplary work.

The finalists' accomplishments include pioneering research to stop the Zika virus and prevent peanut allergies; leading investigations to arrest violent gang members and halt money-transfer schemes; and advancing technologies that improve severe weather forecasts and increase energy efficiency in common household and commercial products. Other finalists delivered life-saving humanitarian aid to millions of people fighting famine or fleeing violence in their home countries; improved information sharing to speed disaster relief and create safer, more efficient transportation systems; expanded the use of aerial drones to fight forest fires and conduct search and rescue operations; and more.

Thank you to the many supervisors, colleagues, friends and family members who introduced us to these remarkable public servants.

The Partnership is now accepting nominations for the 2019 [Sammies](#). We look forward to receiving more inspiring stories about career civil servants who have led innovative and significant accomplishments on behalf of the American people. Every nomination is a unique opportunity to show high-performing employees that their work is noticed and appreciated.

servicetoamericamedals.org





JEFF BEZOS

Founder and CEO, Amazon.com
Founder, Blue Origin
Owner, The Washington Post

THE BUSINESS OF SERVING

Built successful businesses that deliver everyday goods and services, advance space exploration and contribute to our national security and the public good, and launched large-scale philanthropic initiatives to help homeless families and improve educational opportunities in low-income communities

In the 1990s, Jeff Bezos was a budding entrepreneur who started a virtual bookstore called Amazon.com. That 20th-century start-up has grown into an iconic 21st-century company that delivers a wide range of goods and services, including clothing, office supplies, music, movies, IT resources and more.

Since then, Bezos has used his visionary leadership and business acumen to branch out into new fields that benefit our nation and our federal government.

In 2000, Bezos founded Blue Origin, an aerospace manufacturer and spaceflight services company focused on preserving the Earth by moving heavy industry off the planet and into space. The company has developed reusable launch vehicles to lower the cost of access to space, making progress toward a future where millions of people live and work beyond earth's atmosphere.

Blue Origin's New Shepard, a fully reusable suborbital launch vehicle, has completed nine space flights as of July 2018. These



test flights have carried NASA-funded medical technology for treating chest trauma in a space environment and a payload designed to validate a cooling system developed by NASA's Space Technology Mission Directorate. The company also has collaborated with NASA's Commercial Crew Development program on space equipment and systems.

Closer to home, Amazon Web Services is delivering innovative and secure cloud computing products that help the intelligence community, military service members and first responders collect, analyze and share mission-critical information in real time. In 2014, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency became the first intelligence agency to use AWS to share and analyze geospatial intelligence worldwide. The agency put the new technology to good use during the 2014 Ebola crisis in West Africa and when a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal in April 2015. In both instances, the agency provided unclassified maps, images and data through public-facing websites to aid rescuers and relief planners. These tools and resources were vital to first responders arriving from overseas and quickly gathering information in a rapidly changing landscape.

Five years ago, Bezos purchased The Washington Post with a vision to bring it into the digital age and restore its financial viability, which he accomplished in short order. Throughout its storied history, the Post has played an important role holding our government accountable to the people it serves. As a media company, it goes beyond serving as a watchdog, using its broad reach to increase public understanding of our government and its value, and by recognizing the important accomplishments of those who serve.

Most recently, Bezos announced the creation of the Bezos Day One Fund. This new philanthropic initiative will begin with a commitment of \$2 billion in two focus areas: funding existing nonprofits that help homeless families, and creating tier-one preschools that improve educational opportunities in low-income communities.

If the past is any indication, Bezos' entrepreneurial spirit will lead to more creative ideas and successful enterprises that we hope will continue to benefit our nation and our government.





DANIEL L. KASTNER, M.D., PH.D.
Scientific Director, Division of Intramural Research
National Institutes of Health, National Human Genome Research Institute
Bethesda, Maryland

A FEVER TO SOLVE RARE DISEASES

Identified an entire new class of rare genetic diseases and treatments to alleviate suffering for thousands of patients in the U.S. and around the world

Within a few months of starting as a fellow at the National Institutes of Health years ago, Dr. Daniel Kastner cared for an adult patient with an undiagnosed form of recurring arthritis who had endured high fevers nearly every month since he was an infant. Attempting to solve this mystery set Kastner on a path to identifying an entire new class of rare genetic diseases, along with treatments to alleviate the pain and suffering of thousands of patients.

Kastner has worked for decades piecing together patients' information to understand the causes of numerous rare disorders involving unexplained inflammation and fevers that result in disabling conditions and even death.

In the process, he defined this new class of rare illnesses as autoinflammatory diseases and uncovered the genetic causes of seven of them—the latest in 2016. He identified 14 other previously unrecognized disorders and has found effective treatments for 12—improving the quality of patients' lives, and in many cases, saving their lives.

The disorders include DADA2, a genetic disease that usually starts in childhood and can cause recurrent strokes, severe systemic



inflammation, immune deficiency and damage to many of the body's tissues and organs. NOMID, a disease characterized by fevers and inflamed tissues lining the brain, can result in blindness and hearing loss, and if the disorder starts early, can cause death in the teenage years.

“Dan is indisputably the father of the field of autoinflammation and is its intellectual driver,” said Dr. Eric Green, director of the National Human Genome Research Institute.

Autoinflammatory diseases refer to problems with the immune system, which usually fights off viruses, bacteria and infection. These diseases result in high temperatures, rashes, swollen joints and serious buildup of a blood protein in the organs. Autoinflammatory diseases are caused by genetic mutations, but because of their rarity, knowledge of these conditions and treatment options typically are limited.

Now that the full human genome has been mapped, the process of determining the genetic cause of these illnesses is faster, and greater numbers of patients are being helped as a result of Kastner’s research.

In a recent case, Kastner and his team compared the genes of a New Jersey child to a Texas youngster with similar symptoms of recurring fevers and repeated strokes. They found a gene in common and experimented with a biologic medicine used to treat severe rheumatoid arthritis. Since beginning this treatment, 21 children who previously had recurring strokes now have had no strokes at all, and they have been freed of many of the debilitating effects of the disease.

Evan Luton, the mother of the Texas child, said her daughter Hallie was born in 2005 and had seven strokes by 2012, which created temporary paralysis and altered her vision. Hallie experienced high fevers daily and unrelenting pain, and could not go to school. After years searching desperately for help, Kastner diagnosed Hallie’s disease as DADA2 and prescribed the biologic medicine to alleviate her suffering.

“It’s been a miracle. Hallie is walking, going to school and growing normally. She does not have pain or a fever and has not had a stroke since 2012,” Luton said. “Dr. Kastner had the passion to find out what was happening, and he didn’t stop until he found the answer and a treatment. My daughter’s life is so much better because of him.”

Dr. James Balow, a NIH clinical director, said Kastner’s work stands out nationally and internationally.

“He’s a Renaissance physician. He’s deeply empathetic and committed to these patients,” Balow said. “He is one of the world’s leaders, but still has this humility, which is absolutely breathtaking.”



We are proud
to support the
Samuel J. Heyman
Service to America
Medals



America's
DOERS

★★★ **DOING MORE**
for the good of
The **NATION**



Congratulations to the 2018
SAMMIES HONOREES



human energy®

MAKING DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNT

Pioneered research to understand the prevalence of autism and other developmental disabilities, influencing the expansion of health, social and educational services for children with special needs

As the issue of developmental disabilities among children began to enter the nation's consciousness in the 1980s and 1990s, no one knew how common these conditions were or how best to deploy public resources for health, education and social services.

Dr. Marshalyn Yeargin-Allsopp of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stepped into the breach, initiating, designing and implementing studies and surveillance systems that have documented the scope of intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, vision impairment, epilepsy and autism.

"Dr. Yeargin-Allsopp has been a pioneer in identifying the prevalence of autism and other developmental disabilities," said Dr. Deborah Hirtz, a professor of neurological sciences and pediatrics at the University of Vermont.

"The methods she adopted are globally recognized as the gold standard, and the body of work that has been developed from these systems has been instrumental in policies, public health practices and services for children with special health care needs," Hirtz said.

As a pediatrician, Yeargin-Allsopp was deeply interested in childhood development and, after joining CDC in 1981, saw a huge opportunity to gain a better understanding of how many children are affected by developmental disabilities. In the process, she helped build the nation's scientific infrastructure for surveillance of these conditions.

It wasn't easy. The issue was new to many people and there was resistance from the educational community about sharing information. Through sheer persistence, she was able to get educational records, such as intelligence tests and teacher and psychiatric evaluations, that helped paint a fuller picture of the children and bolster CDC's work.

Dr. Coleen Boyle, the director of CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, said Yeargin-Allsopp's "major accomplishment was really bringing developmental disabilities into the mainstream of epidemiology."

As a result of Yeargin-Allsopp's work, today we know that about 10 million children in the United States have some type of developmental disability due to physical, learning, language or behavior impairments, and as many as one million children ages 6 to 17 are living with autism spectrum disorder. Most important, her research laid the foundation for health care providers, schools and support organizations to provide better services to these children and their families.





MARSHALYN YEARGIN-ALLSOPP, M.D.

Associate Director for Children with Special Health Care Needs
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Atlanta, Georgia



Gerald Ankley, Ph.D.

Environmental Protection Agency
Duluth, Minnesota

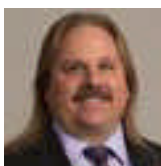
For three decades, established techniques and standards to identify dangerous chemicals and prevent them from contaminating America's lakes and waterways



Judith Lynn Allaire DesHarnais

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District
St. Paul, Minnesota

Directed major flood-protection projects that have saved lives and prevented more than a billion dollars in property damage



Allen R. Hefner Jr., Ph.D.

National Institute of Standards and Technology,
Physical Measurement Laboratory
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Developed the "Hefner model" for power semiconductor devices that revolutionized manufacturing of power conversion systems that millions of people use today, leading to trillions of dollars in energy savings worldwide



John J. Sammarco, Ph.D.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Led game-changing research over three decades that improved lighting in mines, advanced rescue techniques and reduced accidents and injuries



OUR GOVERNMENT CAN'T
DO IT ALONE—AND NEITHER
CAN WE.

YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

The Partnership for Public Service was founded in 2001 as a nonpartisan nonprofit to inspire a new generation into public service and to transform the way government operates.

We successfully advance a combined approach of thought-leadership and program activities that tackle the barriers to building a first-class government workforce. But improving government performance takes time, and we cannot do it alone.

Please consider making a contribution today.

Your gift will have an immediate impact on our current programs and allow us to invest in time-sensitive opportunities that advance our mission.

To learn more about how you can support the Partnership, please visit ourpublicservice.org or contact Christine Carroll at (202) 775-9111 or ccarroll@ourpublicservice.org.



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

The Partnership participates in the
Combined Federal Campaign

CFC #12110



NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS FOR 2019

Honor America's unsung heroes and nominate a federal employee who does remarkable work for a *Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal*.

Any person familiar with the nominee's work and accomplishments may submit a nomination online at servicetoamericamedals.org.

Nominations are due **January 18**.



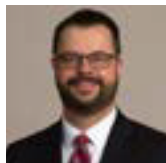
KAREN D. DODGE, MARGARET MOESER AND TEAMS
Staff Attorney (Dodge); Senior Trial Attorney (Moeser)
Federal Trade Commission (Dodge); Department of Justice (Moeser)
Chicago, Illinois (Dodge); Washington, D.C. (Moeser)



Mark L. Bathrick and Team

Department of the Interior
Boise, Idaho

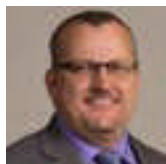
Built the largest civilian aerial drone fleet to help federal agencies fight forest fires, inspect infrastructure, monitor wildlife and natural resources, halt pollution, and conduct search and rescue operations



Stephen C. Curren and the Cyber Incident Response Team

Department of Health and Human Services,
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
Washington, D.C.

Defended health care computer systems in the U.S. from a global cyberattack that threatened patients' health and safety



Blake Douglas Rowe

U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command,
Defense Forensic Science Center
Forest Park, Georgia

Established sophisticated forensic exploitation laboratories to investigate terrorist activities, contributing to thousands of convictions and thwarting attempts to attack Americans overseas and in the U.S.



Jeffrey Elliott Wood Jr. and the North Shore Gang Task Force

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Chelsea, Massachusetts

Led a record takedown of the notorious MS-13 gang, arresting more than 60 leaders and members of this criminal organization in the Boston region



IT'S PAYBACK TIME

Brought justice and restored financial losses of nearly \$600 million for hundreds of thousands of people who were defrauded by money transfer scams

Western Union, the world's largest money transfer company, agreed last year to forfeit \$586 million after admitting to federal authorities that it turned a blind eye as criminals used its service to defraud hundreds of thousands of consumers worldwide. Scam victims were young and old, from all walks of life, with some losing hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The complex criminal and civil investigations, led by Margaret (Molly) Moeser of the Justice Department and Karen Dodge of the Federal Trade Commission, resulted in the largest forfeiture ever by a money services business. As part of the settlement, Western Union agreed to implement a comprehensive anti-fraud program to identify and stop illegal transactions, and to make the forfeited money available to reimburse fraud victims.

Over several years, Moeser and Dodge coordinated parallel nationwide investigations that included interviews with hundreds of victims and Western Union employees, as well as the review of thousands of documents. As part of the settlement, Western Union admitted "to aiding and abetting wire fraud" by allowing scammers to process hundreds of thousands of financial transactions, even when the company realized that many of its agents were helping the con artists from the United States and various corners of the world avoid detection.

The investigations showed that Western Union had received more than 550,000 fraud complaints, with 80 percent coming from the United States where the company has some 50,000 locations. The authorities calculated that the average consumer complaint totaled \$1,148.

For most victims, the fraud started with a phone call or email. Some were told a family member was injured and needed money for emergency medical care. Others were persuaded to pay money to qualify for a prize from a bogus lottery or for a service or product they had not purchased. Other swindles promised jobs or romantic opportunities. All the victims were instructed to send funds through a Western Union wire transfer, but no one received the prizes, products or services they were promised.

Building the case against Western Union involved law enforcement personnel and attorneys from multiple agencies in many geographic areas. Moeser and Dodge coordinated their efforts and shared information when allowed by law, bringing the separate inquiries to a conclusion at the same time.



AT YOUR DIGITAL SERVICE

Created online digital tools for veterans to more easily access benefits and services, delivering a high-quality and seamless user experience

Veterans go online every day to obtain information and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, but often end up frustrated by a complicated tangle of websites, forms, logins and outdated digital tools. The agency's online services were originally structured similar to VA itself, so it was easy for visitors to get lost if they didn't understand how the department was organized.

VA leaders recognized the need to consolidate its online portals into one easy-to-use platform and to make the system more user-friendly, a process that began with the launch of Vets.gov in 2015. Marcella (Marcy) Jacobs became the head of the VA Digital Service team in early 2017, and has added numerous features to the Vets.gov website that enable veterans to more easily discover, apply for, track and manage many of the benefits and services they have earned.

"The most innovative part is that everything is on it. It's the single point of contact," explained Chris Liddell, White House deputy chief of staff for policy coordination. "Previously a lot of service people would have to go from one site to another with multiple sign-ins and passwords, so it was hopeless to navigate and pretty clumsy. Vets.gov is becoming a one-stop shop."

Since its launch, more than 1.6 million veterans have logged into a Vets.gov account, and the site now serves nearly two million visitors each month. That number is expected to grow substantially as the digital service team merges the platform with the department's main information resource—VA.gov—which serves some seven million visitors a month.

Margaret Weichert, deputy director for management at the Office of Management and Budget, said what makes Jacobs so successful is her "very quiet, but deep focus on the mission. It's not about glitzy tech, it's about the end result for the veterans."

Jacobs is most proud of the team's efforts to build transparency into confusing processes such as disability appeals, which can take years to adjudicate. The team developed a tracking system for veterans to check the status of their appeals, something that previously was very difficult to obtain.

Jacobs and her team understand that this is work in progress as they continue making it easier for veterans to interact with VA and conduct additional online transactions, as well as looking for ways to reach a greater number of veterans.





MARCELLA JACOBS AND THE VA DIGITAL SERVICE TEAM
Executive Director, Digital Service
Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, D.C.



Guy Demeter

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D.C.

Developed wide-ranging data management systems that enable FBI analysts to investigate criminal activity and identify threats more quickly



Ariel Gold

Department of Transportation,
Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office
Washington, D.C.

Improved data-sharing to accelerate the adoption of new technologies that increase transportation safety and efficiency, including self-driving cars and vehicles that communicate with one another



Andy Neal and the NFIP Reinsurance Program Team

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Washington, D.C.

Persuaded private reinsurers for the first time to assume some flood damage liability, saving the National Flood Insurance Program \$1 billion in claims in 2017



POWERING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Provided electricity to more than 50 million people in sub-Saharan Africa, while creating hundreds of millions of dollars in export opportunities for U.S. companies

More than a century after the light bulb was invented, two-thirds of the population in sub-Saharan Africa—about 600 million people—lack access to electricity, trapping millions in poverty and stunting economic growth.

Power Africa, an ambitious public-private partnership led by Andrew Herscowitz of the U.S. Agency for International Development, has worked with more than 20 African governments, 145 American companies and financial institutions, 12 federal agencies and a host of international organizations that together have committed \$54 billion to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa.

Starting from scratch in 2013, Herscowitz and the Power Africa team built a solid foundation for this bold foreign policy initiative designed to advance U.S. national security interests while fostering economic development and stability in Africa.

To date, Herscowitz and his team of 56 people in the U.S. and South Africa have advanced 117 projects that will produce 9,500 megawatts of electricity, bringing electric power for the first time to more than 50 million people. The U.S. government has disbursed about \$500 million to help finance this effort, but Power Africa also has stimulated the export of an equal amount in U.S. goods and services, and helped secure thousands of jobs at American companies.

“Andy brought the vision and boundless energy to this initiative,” said Cheryl L. Anderson, the deputy assistant administrator of USAID’s Africa Bureau.

“He has been responsible for making sure the federal agencies, as well as other donors, work together and bring their best contributions to the effort. He engages with private-sector companies, finance people and African government leaders,” said Anderson. “He has a real knack for identifying the right people and bringing them on board.”

In the process, Herscowitz and his team helped large companies like GE and small U.S. firms overcome political, administrative and legal barriers with African governments to win contracts for power generation. He has facilitated financial arrangements with commercial banks, private equity firms and multilateral organizations to back these projects.

“Andy understands the private sector very well. He also has the ability to navigate through the U.S. government and deal with multiple agencies,” said Gayle Smith, a former USAID administrator. “He has mastered all the details and is persistent while also being a diplomat.”





ANDREW M. HERSCOWITZ AND THE POWER AFRICA TEAM
Coordinator for Power Africa
U.S. Agency for International Development
Pretoria, South Africa



David Huizenga

National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, D.C.

Managed numerous high-profile projects with foreign governments to secure large quantities of weapons-useable nuclear materials and prevent them from falling into the wrong hands



Matthew Nims and the USAID Food for Peace Team

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C.

Distributed \$1.4 billion in emergency food assistance to 20 million people in four nations fighting famine and threatened by violent conflicts, saving countless lives under harrowing conditions



Hoa Thi Tran, Ph.D., and Team

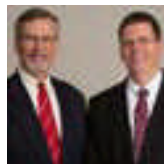
Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Delivered emergency humanitarian relief to nearly 700,000 Rohingya refugees who fled violent persecution in Burma to find safe haven in neighboring Bangladesh





PARIMAL KOPARDEKAR, PH.D., AND THE UTM TEAM
Senior Technologist for Air Transportation Systems
National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Ames Research Center
Moffett Field, California



**Barney S. Graham, M.D., Ph.D.
and Theodore C. Pierson, Ph.D.**

National Institutes of Health,
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
Bethesda, Maryland

Developed a promising vaccine now in clinical testing to prevent the Zika virus, which has caused serious birth defects in the children of women infected during pregnancy



Jordan T. Manos

Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy
(on detail to FEMA in 2017)
Frederick, Maryland

Improved the system used to assess flood damage from hurricanes and other major storms, helping residents receive aid more quickly and saving the government millions of dollars in appraisal costs



Alison Smith, Ph.D.

Naval Surface Warfare Center
Crane, Indiana

Pioneered the use of nanoparticles to mark sensitive military equipment with a unique fingerprint to guard against counterfeit products and protect our nation's warfighters



DRONE CONTROL

Designed a first-of-its-kind traffic management system for unmanned aerial vehicles, paving the way for large-scale use of commercial drones

Government officials estimate that by 2020 there could be more than 700,000 commercial drones flying millions of times a year in low-altitude airspace to deliver packages, monitor traffic, track storms, inspect power lines, aid search and rescue operations, and more.

This expected deluge will require a sophisticated air traffic management system for unmanned aircraft to prevent accidents and airborne congestion, and to efficiently serve public and commercial interests. At the forefront of this endeavor is Parimal Kopardekar (PK), who with his team of engineers and scientists at NASA, has designed a first-of-its-kind system to safely manage multiple unmanned aerial vehicles flying in the same area at the same time.

“PK is the principal architect, researcher and engineer of the unmanned traffic management system,” said Sean Cassidy, director of safety and regulatory affairs at Amazon, one of the private-sector partners collaborating with NASA. “He has acted as a catalyst for government and industry, and has brought people together. He’s trying to introduce a level of coherence and order at the start so it’s done right.”

Jonathan Evans, president of the drone operations company Skyward, compared the new system to an old futuristic cartoon. “We’re talking about nothing short of building the infrastructure of ‘The Jetsons.’ It’s an audacious federal program. It’s got science, tech and next-gen to it. PK is a deft connector.”

Kopardekar’s system covers unmanned aircraft flying out of sight and up to 500 feet in the air. The open-source system uses software, the internet and cell service, instead of air traffic controllers, to keep the aircraft spaced apart. It allows the drones with onboard sensors and connectivity to share information on where they are going, and it helps optimize their trajectories based on what else is in the space.

“The small drones are coming,” Kopardekar said. “If they are not supported and you send millions of drones into the sky, it will be unmanageable. This is a chance to study and put together an entirely new system. The current way can’t accommodate large-scale operations. We have to change the paradigm.”



ZEROING IN ON THE ZIKA MENACE

Collected and analyzed critical data to help protect women and babies from the mosquito-borne Zika virus that was spreading rapidly in the U.S. and its territories

Infections from the mosquito-borne Zika virus exploded in the Americas and began to spread in the U.S. and its territories in 2015 and 2016, triggering devastating birth defects in babies whose mothers had been exposed during pregnancy, and causing widespread alarm.

Margaret (Peggy) Honein from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention assembled an emergency response team of nearly 200 people to gather the fast-breaking data, determine how the virus worked and figure out how best to protect mothers and babies.

“Peggy rapidly built [the Zika Pregnancy and Infant Registry] to collect information from women across the country and in U.S. territories who were potentially exposed to the Zika virus during pregnancy, monitored what was happening to their babies and turned that information around to create a rapid response,” said Dr. Coleen Boyle, director of CDC’s Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities.

Honein’s team analyzed the data and prepared clinical guidelines for physicians and travel recommendations for women who were pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant, and for their partners. They created the Zika pregnancy hotline to provide clinical consultations and disseminate vital information, and they established Zika Care Connect, a compendium of state and regional clinical care resources to help women find and access specialty services.

“She led a collaboration with our state health departments, local health departments, international partners and the intensive effort with our territories to understand this new syndrome and take action to reduce the risk for babies and mothers,” said Dr. Anne Schuchat, CDC’s principal deputy director. “She brought extraordinary scientific expertise, leadership and management to an unprecedented emergency response to the Zika virus.”

Dr. Denise Jamieson of the Emory University School of Medicine, said it is hard to quantify how many pregnant women were protected against the devastating effects of the Zika infection directly due to Honein’s efforts. “But based on what we know, I am confident her efforts had a significant impact,” said Jamieson.





MARGARET HONEIN, PH.D.

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Barbara G. Kutchko, Ph.D.

Department of Energy,
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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

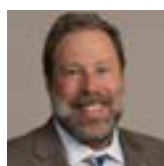
Helped rewrite standards for the use of foamed cement in oil wells to prevent blowouts and damaging spills, protecting workers and the environment



Soheila J. Maleki, Ph.D.

Agricultural Research Service
New Orleans, Louisiana

Led life-changing research on the causes, detection, prevention and potential remedies for peanut and tree nut allergies, which affect up to two million American children



Tim Schmit

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Madison, Wisconsin

Developed cutting-edge satellite technology for detecting and monitoring severe weather, helping protect people and property from approaching disasters





ALISON SMITH, PH.D.

Chief Engineer, Materials Analysis of Electronic Component Technologies
Naval Surface Warfare Center
Crane, Indiana

THINKING BIG ON A NANOSCALE

Pioneered the use of nanoparticles to mark sensitive military equipment with a unique fingerprint to guard against counterfeit products and protect our nation's warfighters

The Defense Department spends billions of dollars a year on parts for weapons and military equipment that run the gamut from microelectronics for fighter jets and missile guidance systems to materials used in engine mounts. If a shady operator along the supply chain slips in counterfeit or potentially defective components, it puts at risk the nation's security and the lives of military service members.

Alison Smith, a materials chemist with the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Crane, Indiana, discovered a promising innovation to deal with this huge risk—the use of nanomaterials to mark and track electronic components and military parts to assure their authenticity.

Her innovative research has “opened the door to a new age of anti-counterfeiting and anti-tampering measures” that could help prevent malfunctions in strategic weapons systems, said Jonathan Dilger, director of research at NSWCC Crane.



“The threat to national security of counterfeit products is all too real,” Dilger said. “Alison is specifically focused on researching the potential benefits of using nanotechnology to identify legitimate components and prevent counterfeit, faulty parts from entering the supply chain.”

Smith and a team of researchers at Indiana University grew tiny crystals, or nanoparticles, in unique geometric patterns. When inserted on an electronic component or a part used by the military, these nanoparticles reflect light in a way that creates a unique marker that cannot be replicated or tampered with and does not affect functionality.

These fingerprints can be read with any properly equipped camera, including a smartphone, so in the future, the military could use an app to quickly check the authenticity of a component.


At the moment, counterfeiting is relatively easy and has become a significant problem with microelectronics, the building block of today’s technology, said Brian Sabo, chief engineer at NSWC Crane.

The next step is to take Smith’s discovery from the laboratory to the real world by applying for a patent and licensing companies to use it, including for non-military applications. The pharmaceutical and fashion industries, for example, can combat counterfeit products by tagging medications and other products, making it possible to check their origin or if an item has expired.



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