



47TH STUDENT AWARDS

ACS MARYLAND SECTION

2025



Speaker

Astrophysicist and Author

Dr. Mario Livio, PH.D.

IS EARTH EXCEPTIONAL?

The Quest for Cosmic Life

ABSTRACT

For a long time, scientists have wondered how life has emerged from inanimate chemistry, and whether Earth is the only place where it exists. Charles Darwin speculated about life on Earth beginning in a warm little pond. Some of his contemporaries believed that life existed on Mars. For more than a century, the origins and extent of life have remained shrouded in mystery. But, as Jack Szostak and myself reveal in *Is Earth Exceptional?* the veil is finally lifting. We describe how life's building blocks—from RNA to amino acids and cells—could have emerged from the chaos of Earth's early existence. We then apply the knowledge gathered from cutting-edge research across the sciences to the search for life in the cosmos: both life as we know it and life as we don't. Why and where life exists are two of the biggest unsolved problems in science. *Is Earth Exceptional?* is the ultimate exploration of the question of whether life is a freak accident or a chemical imperative.

Sunday, April 6, 2025

11:30 A.M. Fourier Library

Notre Dame of Maryland University

Join us in recognizing these student awardees nominated by their advisors and chemistry professors from 25 universities and colleges in the Maryland area

Contact Saraswathi Narayan PhD

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