



MARYLAND CHEMISTS NEWS
APRIL 6, 2025

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STUDENT AWARDS LECTURE

DR. MARIO LIVIO, PhD
ASTROPHYSICIST AND AUTHOR

*Life's building blocks—from RNA to amino acids
and cells—could have emerged from the chaos of
Earth's early existence.*

By Beatrice Salazar



ACS Local Section
Maryland

IS EARTH EXCEPTIONAL?
The Quest for Cosmic Life

MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

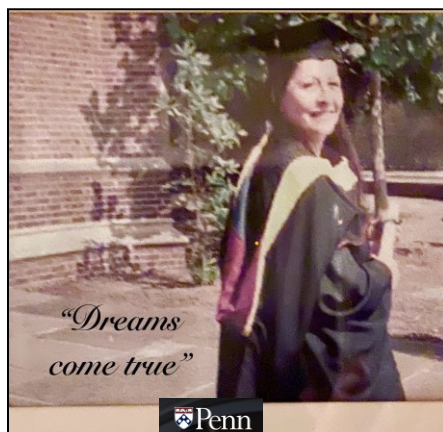
A warm welcome from the 2025 ACS Maryland Section Chair

Beatrice Salazar

Is a graduate from The University of Pennsylvania, UPENN.

She obtained a Master of Chemistry Education.

BA in Mathematics and Computer Science from
Eastern Connecticut State University, ECSU.



Beatrice has been an active ACS member for 26 years and a member of the ACS Maryland Section for 15 years. During this time, she has occupied several leadership positions in the local section including councilor and chair in 2018 and 2025. In addition to this year's chair position, she will continue her duties in the local section, as coordinator of the Chemistry Olympiad, USNCO, coordinator of the Chemist Celebrate Earth Day, CCED, and chair of the Award Committee "The Maryland Chemist of the Year Award".

The Maryland Local section of the American Chemical Society begins the year 2025 with a new and refreshing theme: **"Making Things Happen."** I want to encourage all current members to invite other ACS members residing in Maryland to join the ACS local section and collaborate with the local section members to improve the careers of young new chemists. We need new leaders and partnerships with industry and academia. This is where your collaboration comes in because this enterprise is a team effort.

Including in my plan as chair of the section for 2025, I have set up 4 in-person board meetings and 2 virtual meetings. All ACS members are welcome to attend these meetings. Event announcements will be on our website acsmaryland.org. The leadership of the ACS Maryland local section will make sure that all members attending will be heard, their new ideas and event proposals will be recorded and considered for economic support if needed. Please feel welcome and bring your thoughts to be discussed in our meetings.

Board meetings will take place virtually in February and June. The in-person meetings will be in April, August, October and December. I would like to invite current members and new members to become leaders in the local section and help your career ladder as well as your colleagues' careers. Any ACS Maryland Section's member can run for any leadership position, no experience necessary. At the present time we have some important positions open 1__ Chair-Elect (2026) to become chair in 2027. 2__ Two leadership/board positions as Member at Large and Alternate Councilor which renew each year. The positions of Secretary and treasurer are renewed every two years. Councilor's positions renew every 3 years. The duties of each position are explained in our website <https://www.acsmaryland.org> ([Leadership positions](#)). If anyone is interested, please contact any existing volunteer member or send a note with your credentials to Beatrice Salazar, Chair-2025 ACS Maryland Section at <mailto:beatricesalazar1@gmail.com>.

Great links: [Stay informed](#) | [Improve your career](#) | [The community](#) | [Environmental webinar](#) | [The future of Chemistry](#)

Thank you for your time, I hope to hear from you soon.

Beatrice Salazar January /2025

MEET

SARASWATHI NARAYAN, PhD

STUDENT AWARDS PROGRAM CHAIR

47th Student Awards Ceremony

Snarayan5@yahoo.com



The event will be hosted by Dr. Jason Labonte, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Notre Dame University of Maryland. As the chair of the Student Awards Committee, I am honored to oversee this prestigious event. Join us as we recognize and celebrate the achievements of our students in an afternoon filled with inspiring speeches, awards presentations, and formal lunch. This ceremony highlights the dedication and hard work of our talented students in chemistry.

Congratulations!

**to all nominated college and
university students of chemistry and
related disciplines**

We are pleased to celebrate the
47th anniversary of the
Student Awards Ceremony (SAC) on
Sunday, April 6 from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM
in Fourier Library Hall of
Notre Dame University of Maryland.

We look forward to seeing you there and
sharing on this joyous occasion!

History of the Student Awards Committee and Origins of the student Awards Program

The Student Awards program was initiated by Professor Carl Minier at Essex Community College of Baltimore in March 1978. Having served as the chair for the American Chemical Society (ACS) Local Section for several years, Minier sought to recognize and promote outstanding students in Chemistry, encouraging them to embark on their careers as scientists. This initiative has been held successfully every year since its inception and takes place annually in April. In summary, the Student Awards Committee (SAC) has a rich history of recognizing and promoting outstanding students in chemistry. Through annual ceremonies and collaborations, the SAC not only celebrates academic excellence but also nurtures the scientific aspirations of future generations. The legacy of Professor Carl Minier's vision is carried forward each year, making a significant impact on the lives of many promising chemists.



47TH STUDENT AWARDS

ACS MARYLAND SECTION



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

Chair & Program Coordinator of ACS Students Awards at snarayan5@yahoo.com

Dr. Mario Livio

Dr. Mario Livio will grace this year's Student Award ceremony. Dr. Mario Livio is an internationally known astrophysicist, best-selling author, and popular speaker. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Livio's contributions to science and his investigations into various intricate aspects of astrophysics add considerable prestige to the event, inspiring the next generation of chemists to explore the vast frontiers of scientific inquiry.

Mario Livio worked for 24 years with the Hubble Space Telescope. He is a bestselling author of eight books.



The Title of the presentation: "IS EARTH EXCEPTIONAL- THE QUEST FOR COSMIC LIFE"

He has received numerous awards and recognitions for his research and his books, including having been selected as the "Carnegie Centenary Professor" by the universities of Scotland in 2003, and as the "Danz Distinguished Lecturer" by the University of Washington in 2006. Dr. Livio is the author of eight

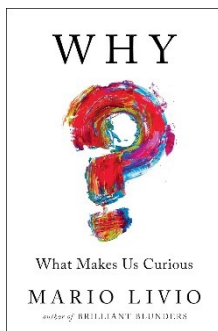
popular science books. His bestselling book "The Golden Ratio" won him the "Peano Prize" in 2003 and the "International Pythagoras Prize" in 2004. His book Galileo and the Science Deniers was selected by the Washington Post and by Science News as one of the best books of the year.

PUBLICATIONS:

Dr. Livio has published more than 500 scientific articles on cosmology. Supernova explosions, black holes, extrasolar planets, and the emergence of life in the universe.

Dr. Mario has received numerous awards and recognition for his research and books. You can find all about Dr. Livio in this link [Mario Livio | Home Mario Livio – Author & Astrophysicist](#) and in our website (acsmaryland.org): 47th Student Awards Ceremony – 2025 – The Maryland Section of the American Chemical Society.

Recommendations: Other books by Dr. Livio



"This is a fascinating book proven to entertain you from page one to the end. When one thinks that everything is covered, Dr. Livio brings the Epilogue (p189-196) and engages the reader with more stories, anecdotes and a touch of reality connecting all his writing to today's use of AI and internet.

In this book one remembers (or learn of) famous philosopher and scientists. The author manages to connect them with the reader. It feels like you are one of them. We are curious people and because of our career choices, we have certain type (or more types) of curiosity; chemistry lovers and research enthusiasts have epistemic curiosity. This is a book all chemist must read, slow or fast. You will enjoy it! -Beatrice Salazar, Chair ACS Maryland Section, 2025.

"Have you ever wondered why we wonder why? Mario Livio has, and takes you on a fascinating quest to understand the origin and mechanisms of curiosity. I thoroughly recommend it." – Adam Riess, Nobel Prize winner in Physics, 2011.

CONGRATULATIONS 2025 STUDENT AWARDEES

Celebration of Excellence

The ACS Student Awards celebrate one outstanding chemistry student from each college or university that participates in the Maryland Section of the ACS. The award ceremony is traditionally held during the spring meeting of the Maryland Local Section of the ACS, which convenes on Sundays. The primary aim of these awards is to encourage students with a pronounced interest and aptitude in chemistry to pursue further endeavors in the field.

The ceremony is widely regarded as one of the most attended events, drawing students, their families, teachers, and mentors together to honor exceptional talent. Each year, about 20-23 students are selected from area colleges and universities. The selection process, overseen by the chair and other faculty members, results in one Outstanding Chemistry Student being chosen from each participating institution.

2025 MARYLAND LOCAL SECTION CELEBRATES STUDENT AWARDEES

Each student awardee receives an Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Chemistry Certificate, ACS souvenirs (mailed separately), and a copy of the April Edition of the Maryland Chemist News designed and produced by Beatrice Salazar, Chair, ACS Maryland Section featuring all the awardees' photographs.

Lunch: Formal Lunch is served at the venue hall before the ceremony, fostering networking among attendees.

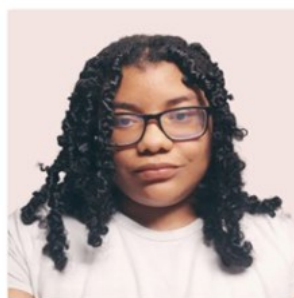
Views and content (by Saraswathi Narayan, PhD and Beatrice Salazar, M.S.) expressed are those of the authors only.



Alexa Tieman Howard
Community College



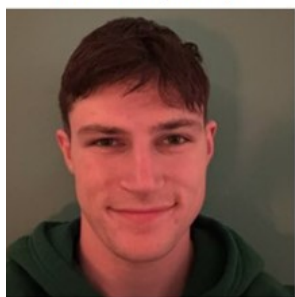
Amanda Jean Thompson
McDaniel College



Ann Nicole Byrd
Morgan State University



Chani Dima Frederick
Community College



Danny Cox
Cecil Community College



Edward McGillicuddy
Loyola University of Maryland

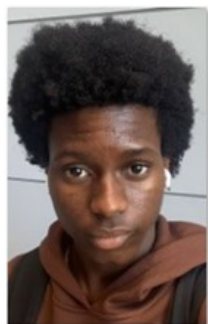


Isabel Lopez Santiago
Johns Hopkins University



Jake Cuzick
Mount St. Mary's University

CONGRATULATIONS 2025 STUDENT AWARDEES



Jimetochukwu Solomon Coppin
State University



Kyah Young Baltimore City
Community College



Maidah Javed Anne Arundel
Community College



Megan McGrath United States
Naval Academy



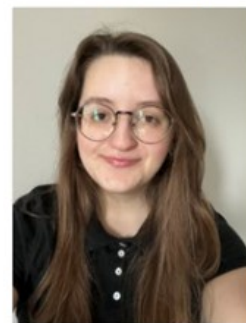
Melissa Nunez Hood college



Nicholas Richards Harford
Community College



Rebecca Foulk Washington
College



Rebecca Glessner Community
College Baltimore County



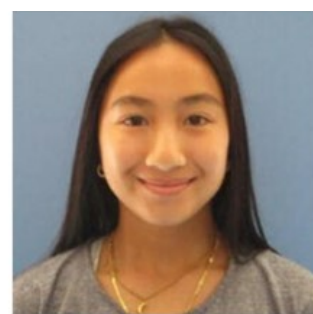
Rya C. Holzman University of
Maryland Baltimore Campus



Sophia Neppl St.Mary's College
of Maryland



Sydney Braithwaite Towson
University



Tam Truong Notre Dame
University of Maryland



Tamar Singman Stevenson
University



Zayan Sami Goucher College



ACS Local Section
Maryland

STUDENT AWARDS
2025

To all awardees, we wish you the best on your careers. Thank you for attending!