



RFS Briefings

April 30, 2016

World Congress on Industrial Biotechnology Held April 17-20, San Diego CA, go.bio.org, April 27, 2016

Over 1,200 of industrial biotech's best and brightest attended the Congress in San Diego. Topics included biofuels, renewable chemicals, biobased materials and emerging technologies. Rosalind Franklin Society was proud to sponsor the Young Stars of Industrial Biotechnology & the Rosalind Franklin Award Presentation on Tuesday, April 19. President and CEO of [NexSteppe](#), Anna Rath, was presented the 2016 BIO Rosalind Franklin Award, established to honor an outstanding woman in the field of industrial biotechnology and bioprocessing. [Read More](#)

Sanford I. and Joan Weill Announce \$185 Million Donation for new U.C. San Francisco Neuroscience Center, nytimes.com, April 27, 2016

In the largest-ever gift to UC San Francisco, the Weill Family Foundation and Joan and Sanford I. Weill have donated \$185 million to establish the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences, in an ambitious effort to

accelerate the development of new therapies for diseases affecting the brain and nervous system, including psychiatric disorders. The gift is the largest ever made to support the neurosciences in the United States and will provide the lead investment for construction of a new 270,000-square-foot building at UCSF's Mission Bay Campus, as well as advance the University's educational mission of recruiting top scientists. The new building will house state-of-the-art research labs, as well as clinics for patients with brain and nervous system disorders. [Read More](#)

Women In Bio Plenary Event at BIO Convention: “The Influential Paths of Great Visionary Leaders,” womeninbio.org, April 13, 2016

The signature Women in Bio Plenary Event will be held in conjunction with the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) International Convention on Monday, June 6, 2016, at the Clift Hotel, San Francisco. The panel of esteemed speakers will discuss critical, and often controversial, issues affecting women in the life sciences industry, identify important industry trends and how to act on them, and how they created their career paths. [Read More](#)

Yvette Fay Francis-McBarnette, a Pioneer in Treating Sickle Cell Anemia, Dies at 89, nytimes.com, April 10, 2016

Dr. Francis-McBarnette was the daughter of college-educated schoolteachers who emigrated from Jamaica. After skipping several grades in school, she enrolled at Hunter College when she was just 14 and earned a bachelor's degree in physics in three and a half years. At 18, Francis-McBarnette was too young for medical school and unable to get a job in a lab in New York City. She got a master's in chemistry at Columbia instead. In 1946, at the age of 19, she was the second black woman to enroll at the Yale School of Medicine. In medicine, Francis-McBarnette broke barriers for sufferers of sickle cell disease. She began

using prophylactic antibiotics 15 years before their effectiveness was confirmed by an article in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. In 1966, in private practice and an attending pediatrician at Jamaica Hospital, she launched the Foundation for Research and Education in Sickle Cell Disease with colleagues. The foundation was instrumental in opening the first comprehensive sickle cell clinic of which Francis-McBarnette became director. Dr. Francis-McBarnette is survived by her husband, Olvin McBarnette, six children and three grandchildren. [Read More](#)

Leslie B. Vosshall, PhD, Leads Aedes Mosquito Genome Working Group, nytimes.com, Mar. 30, 2016

Leslie Vosshall, Ph.D., the Robin Chemers Neustein Professor and head of the Laboratory of Neurogenetics and Behavior at The Rockefeller University, is a global leader in the study of mosquito-borne illnesses and has led recent efforts to map mosquito DNA. She issued a Twitter plea in January 2016 for advice on constructing a detailed mosquito DNA map as Brazil began reporting a spike in newborns with unusually small heads that was apparently related to the Zika virus. Her plea led rival scientists to form a work group, galvanizing the small community of researchers who already spend most of their time researching the insect. This new understanding may help researchers stem the spread of the Zika virus and other diseases. [Read More](#)

Colleges Spending Millions to Comply with Federal Policy Directives on Sexual Misconduct on Campus, nytimes.com, Mar. 29, 2016

Harvard, Yale, and UC Berkeley are some of the highlighted institutions in a recent *NY Times* article who have hired Title IX officers and implemented programs to educate students and faculty. The Title IX officers lead a new bureaucracy that oversees how the institutions

respond to complaints of sexual violence under Title IX. More than 200 colleges and universities are under federal investigation for the way they have handled complaints of sexual misconduct, compared to 55 institutions two years ago. [Read More](#)

'Lab Girl' Memoir by Geobiologist, Hope Jahren, Blends Personal and Professional Experiences, nytimes.com, Mar. 28, 2016

Hope Jahren, Professor of Geobiology at the University of Hawaii, describes in detail growing up in Minnesota, going to college, getting her PhD at the University of California, Berkeley, establishing herself as a group leader first at the Georgia Institute of Technology, then Johns Hopkins University, and finally the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. Interspersed with this account are chapters describing the plant world, and her emergence as the person and scientist she is meant to be. [Read More](#)

Gairdner International Prizes Awarded to Five Scientists for Research on Molecular Gene Editing System CRISPR-Cas, thelancet.com, Mar. 26, 2016

Emmanuelle Charpentier from the Max Planck Institute, Germany and Jennifer Doudna from UC Berkley were each recognized by Gairdner for work demonstrating that the CRISPR-Cas system could be used as a specific genome-editing tool in individual cells. "Our work led to an understanding of a protein called Cas9 that functions like a molecular scalpel in cells. It allows scientists and clinicians to make precise changes to the DNA of cells, even by changing a single letter in the DNA code of a human cell. It is really allowing scientists to engineer the DNA of cells, with a precision and simplicity that was never possible in the past", explained Doudna. [Read More](#)

Dr. Vivian Pinn Inducted into 2016 Health Care Hall of Fame,

modernhealthcare.com, March 24, 2016

Dr. Vivian Pinn, the only woman and the lone minority student to graduate from the University of Virginia School of Medicine in 1967, the first African-American woman to chair an academic pathology department in the U.S, and the inaugural full-time director of the Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health, has been inducted in the Health Care Hall of Fame. This prestigious award is in partnership between Modern Healthcare and the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) and was created to honor the men and women who have made outstanding contributions and extraordinary strides in the healthcare industry.

Each year, two or three healthcare luminaries are inducted into the Modern Healthcare Hall of Fame. Since 1988, ninety-five healthcare visionaries, original thinkers and leaders have been honored with this well-respected distinction. [Read More](#)

Two-day Summit: Breakthrough Biomedical Philanthropy, salk.edu,
Mar. 17, 2016

This two-day summit, hosted at the beautiful Salk Institute, will feature presentations and panel discussions on topics from the worlds of philanthropy, foundations and science. RFS Board Member and Nobel Prize winner, Elizabeth Blackburn, is the new President of the Salk Institute and will be a featured speaker at the Summit, scheduled May 12-13, 2016. [Read More](#)

Denise Fyffe, PhD, Awarded Three-Year Grant to Study Care for Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI), scienmag.com, Mar. 17, 2016

Prof. Fyffe, senior researcher with Kessler Foundation, West Orange NJ, was awarded a three-year, \$590,000 grant from the Department of Defense Spinal Cord Injury Research Program to study care of veterans with SCI. Prof. Fyffe's research will further the understanding of subpopulations of veterans with SCI, their caregivers and family members. [Read More](#)

Eppendorf & Science Prize for Neurobiology Call for Entries, Mar. 16, 2016

The annual Eppendorf & Science Prize for Neurobiology is an international award which honors young scientists for their outstanding contributions to neurobiological research based on methods of molecular and cell biology. The winner and finalists are selected by a committee of independent scientists, chaired by Science's Senior Editor, Dr. Peter Stern. Researchers who are not older than 35 years are invited to apply. Prize money of US \$25,000 is awarded to the winner, as well as publication in Science of an essay by the winner about his/her research, full support to attend the Prize Ceremony held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Society for Neuroscience, and an invitation to visit Eppendorf in Hamburg, Germany. Up to three finalists are also honored. Deadline for entries is June 15, 2016. [Read More](#)

Jennifer Lippincott-Schwartz to Help Establish New Neuronal Cell Biology Program, hhmi.org, Mar. 15, 2016

Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Janelia Research Campus is expanding its scientific horizons to encompass the cellular realm. Highlighting the new initiative is the launch of a Neuronal Cell Biology Program that will support scientists investigating the structural and

functional details of discrete neurons and exploring the inner landscape of these cells in dynamic neural environments. Jennifer Lippincott-Schwartz is moving to Janelia to establish the program. Prof. Lippincott-Schwartz spent 23 years as chief of the section on organelle biology in the Cell Biology and Metabolism Program, in the Division of Intramural Research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and is an RFS Board Member. [Read More](#)

Dr. Roberta Capp Awarded The Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Biomedical Science, vilcek.org, Mar. 14, 2016

Dr. Roberta Capp, assistant professor of emergency medicine at the University of Colorado, Denver, works to make health care accessible for those in need. Born in Brazil, Dr. Capp immigrated to the United States with her mother and sister at the age of 14. Despite hardships experienced by the trio, Dr. Capp graduated as high school valedictorian and enrolled in premedical studies at the University of Colorado. Her stand-out work in molecular and cell biology resulted in scholarships and awards and she was accepted to Harvard Medical School. During her time at Harvard, her uninsured mother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. This experience fueled her interest in remedying the difficulties of patients with poor access to health care. Capp developed a program to identify such patients and pair them with trained professionals in their own communities called navigators. To evaluate the efficacy of navigators, she launched a yearlong randomized control trial and found that patient navigation services led to reduced emergency department use and hospital admissions. [Read More](#)

The Society for Neuroscience is accepting nominations for the 2016 Peter and Patricia Gruber International Research Award, philanthropynewsdigest.org, Mar 13, 2016

Supported by the [Gruber Foundation](#), the annual award program recognizes two young neuroscientists for outstanding research and educational pursuits in an international setting. Recipients will receive a \$25,000 cash prize and complimentary registration, transportation, and two nights hotel accommodations for the SFN annual meeting. Application deadline is May 20, 2016. [Read More](#)

EDF Energy's "Pretty Curious" Campaign Draws Criticism for Use of Stereotype, ft.com, Mar. 7, 2016

Is gender neutrality the way to close the Stem gap? "I hate this presumption that Stem (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) stuff needs to be 'girlified' to appeal to women," wrote Emily Schoerning, director of community organizing and research at the National Center for Science Education in the US, adding that it draws attention "to our gender over and above our achievements". EDF's website states: "It's not about being 'pretty'; it's about being 'pretty curious'. Using 'pretty' is a play on words. We are using the word in the sense of 'pretty unexpected', 'pretty determined', 'pretty inventive', 'pretty focused' and 'pretty curious'." The question remains: should girls be singled out and encouraged to pursue and stick with Stem careers, or is the best route to equality gender-blind? [Read More](#)