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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Connecticut Science Center Announces Annual Award Honorees

Hartford, CT, October 27, 2023 – The Connecticut Science Center is honoring science students, educators, researchers and business leaders with its annual STEM Achievement Awards and the Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Leadership Awards. Each year, the Connecticut Science Center celebrates the achievements of professionals, groups, advocates, businesses, students, and leaders who share their mission to inspire lifelong learning through interactive and innovative experiences. These honorees were recognized at the Connecticut Science Center Annual Gala on October 14.

“We are honored to recognize the exceptional individuals who have been selected as the recipients of the 2023 STEM Achievement Awards and Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Leadership Award. These inspiring recipients and these awards elevate the importance of STEM education and encourage more young people to pursue studies and careers in these fields.” Said Matt Fleury, President & CEO of the Connecticut Science Center. “We must continue to support and empower the next generation of scientists and innovators, and these honorees serve as a shining example of what can be achieved with dedication, talent, and a passion for discovery.”

The **2023 STEM Achievement Awards**, presented by Stanley Black & Decker, are presented to an individual, group or organization contributing to STEM in the region, opening STEM Careers to diverse audiences, and impacting STEM Education in the community.



Christopher Allen, Sr., CEO of iCleanse, was selected as the **Innovator Honoree (Individual)**. A seasoned entrepreneur, Chris acquired iCleanse in 2020 with an investor, propelling it from phone disinfection to a global Swift UV station rollout and interactive digital out of home experience. Beyond business, Chris invests in startups, serves on various boards, and champions philanthropic causes, leaving a profound impact on his Connecticut community for more than 46 years.



Rose Karvandi, B.S. Physiology & Neurobiology UCONN Class of '23 was selected as the **Higher Education Honoree**. Rose, a recent graduate of the University of Connecticut Honors Program, is pursuing medical school and is passionate about empowering women in STEM. She founded the Girls in STEM Program at Somers High School and served as a mentor for the Women, Math, Science, and Engineering (WiMSE) Learning Community at UConn. Rose was also involved in Cancer Survivorship Research and advocacy for the Iranian

community. Currently, she is coordinating a community-based pre-health program at UConn Health and participating in clinical research to serve underserved communities.



Richard McCarthy, retired science teacher at Frank Ward Strong Middle School was selected as the **K-12 Educator of the Year Honoree**. Dr. Richard McCarthy (aka Dr. Mac) has a Bachelor's Degree in Science from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in Cellular Biology from Yale. He's taught and researched at both Rush University and Miles, Inc., bringing professional experience to his classrooms. For 23 years, he taught science in Connecticut public schools, including 21 at Frank Ward Strong Middle School in Durham.



Nyasia M. Pitts, Connecticut Science Center Teen Innovation Program Participant, was selected as the **Youth Honoree**. Nyasia is a driven Health Sciences student at Southern Connecticut State University, and passionate about nursing. She is set on graduating in four years with her nursing degree. A proud graduate of Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy in 2023, Nyasia has already accomplished much in her young life. Nyasia was also a participant in the Connecticut Science Center Teen Innovation Program. Her peers fondly recall her as a wonderful team member, always willing to step up and work hard

while encouraging her fellow teammates. A natural leader with a fun-loving spirit, Nyasia had a way of making every group she worked with better.



General Dynamics Electric Boat of Groton was selected as the **Innovator Honoree (Organization)**. General Dynamics Electric Boat designs, builds, repairs and modernizes nuclear submarines for the U.S. Navy. Headquartered in Groton, Connecticut, the company employs more than 20,500 people. Established in 1899, Electric Boat has set standards of excellence in the design, construction and lifecycle support of submarines. Primary operations are the shipyard in Groton, CT, the automated hull-fabrication and outfitting facility in Quonset Point, RI, and an engineering building in New London, CT.



The Women's League Child Development Center of Hartford was selected as the **Non-Profit Organization Honoree**. Founded by African American ministers' wives more than a century ago, the Women's League Child Development Center is the largest single-site early education center in Greater Hartford, with a licensed capacity to serve 208 infants, toddlers, and preschool age children. Its young learners, primarily Black and Brown, are nurtured and educated in a state-of-the-art building with 17 classrooms. In January 2023, the Women's League opened a unique STEAM Learning Lab, the first of its kind in the area for infants,

toddlers, and preschoolers. The Center aims to give Hartford's children — regardless of their families' incomes— the same access and opportunity as their suburban counterparts for STEAM learning, while nurturing the Black and Brown scientists, technology professionals, engineers, and mathematicians of tomorrow.

The **Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Leadership Award** recognizes a professional woman and a student who are leaders in their chosen STEM field. The winners were selected by the Science Center's Women in Science steering committee based on their demonstrated commitment to advancing STEM through thoughtful engagement with diverse audiences and by making a significant effort to support other women and girls in their pursuit of STEM as learners, teachers, and professionals.

Tracy Propheeter-Hinckley, Design Deputy Chief / Hot Section Engineering Airfoil PL3 Aftermarket & Sustainment Engineering (ASE) at Pratt & Whitney, was selected as the **2023 Honoree**. Tracy is a highly accomplished airfoil design engineer, working for Pratt & Whitney's Hot Section Engineering (HSE) since 2002. She has experience redesigning airfoils for various engines and is well-versed in Unigraphics modeling. Tracy holds a Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Master's of Engineering Science, both with additional certifications in related fields. Her expertise in creativity and diversity in engineering has led to more than 200 patents, and she has earned a Deputy Design Engineering position. Outside of work, Tracy enjoys spending time with her family and volunteering with the Girl Scouts of Connecticut.



Ashley Malkin, Greenwich High School, was selected as the **2023 Student Honoree**. She has spent the past two years conducting original research at the intersection of artificial intelligence and neuroscience. Her project designing a diagnostic for concussions using artificial intelligence to reduce bias won a Grand Award in Translational Medicine at the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair and First Place in Computer Science at the Connecticut Science & Engineering Fair. She designed a machine learning system to discover new treatments for neurological disorders and will be presenting her research at the 2023 World Congress of Neuroscience in Granada, Spain. Ashley is the founder of ScienceGirls!, a free STEM mentoring program for elementary school girls, and has designed and led workshops on topics including computer science, engineering, neuroscience, chemistry, and physics for more than 150 girls. At Greenwich High School, Ashley is a Captain of the Debate Team, Vice President of the Girls Who Code Club, Vice President of the Economics Club and on the Greenwich Squash Team.

To read full bios on all of the STEM Achievement Award and Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Leadership Award honorees, visit CTScienceCenter.org/Awards.

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About the Connecticut Science Center: The LEED- Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Serving more than 4 million people since opening in 2009, the Science Center features more than 165 exhibits in ten galleries, covering a range of topics including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children's gallery, and much more. Other features include the state's only year-round butterfly habitat, five educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store, and ongoing events for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning

opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. The Connecticut Science Center is the home to the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers, offering powerful professional development for educators. More information: CTScienceCenter.org or (860) SCIENCE.