

centerline

CEE'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION! ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS CELEBRATE MILESTONE



Admiral Bobby R. Inman, USN (Ret.) received the Medal for Excellence in Education. Dinner photos credit: David Fox Photography.



Sanjay Palsamudram received the Medal for Excellence in Education.



Gayle E. Wilson received the Medal for Excellence in Education.

The Center for Excellence in Education (CEE) celebrated its 40th anniversary in Cambridge, MA. Two hundred and fifty alumni and CEE supporters participated in festivities and special events spread over the weekend of October 13-15, 2023. CEE hosted a series of panels and discussions as well as CEE Talks in which alumni of the Center's Research Science Institute (RSI) and USA Biolympiad (USABO) discussed interests, careers, and ground-breaking research. Saturday's events included a panel of Nobel Laureates who discussed their research and discoveries. CEE Trustee

Feng Zhang (RSI '99), PhD, Core Institute Member, Broad Institute of MIT & Harvard, and pioneer of the revolutionary CRISPR gene-editing technology, delivered the keynote address. CEE's President **Joann P. DiGennaro** urged alumni to stand up for free speech in science and technology research. Medals of Excellence were presented to **Admiral Bobby R. Inman, USN (Ret.)**, **Sanjay Palsamudram**, and **Gayle E. Wilson** by **Mel Chaskin**, Chairperson of CEE's Board of Trustees.

"The weekend exceeded all our expectations!" DiGennaro said. "Thank you to all the terrific panelists, presenters, and moderators who helped make the event so memorable. Thank you also to all of our 40th anniversary sponsors – the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation, DoD STEM, Jane Street, TBL Foundation, Citadel/Citadel Securities, and Two Sigma."

(Continued on Page 4)

RSI '24 REGISTRATION OPEN FOR PROGRAM AT MIT

CEE is now accepting online applications for the 2024 RSI, held in collaboration with MIT on its campus from June 23 to August 3. High school juniors may apply at www.cee.org/programs/apply-rsi through December 13, 2023.

CEE's RSI is a summer STEM program collaboratively sponsored with MIT that combines on-campus course work in scientific theory with off-campus research in science and technology. CEE and MIT have increased the number of RSI students to 100. CEE Trustee **Mark Kantrowitz** (RSI '84) will again serve as the RSI Director. RSI continues to be cost-free for students to attend, thanks to the generosity of donors.

(Continued on Page 3)



CEE Trustee **Feng Zhang** (RSI '99) PhD was the Keynote Speaker at the 40th Anniversary Celebration dinner.

CEE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Five years ago at the Center's 35th Anniversary Celebration, I happily reported the achievements of CEE's educational programs. Five years ago, the Research Science Institute at MIT hosted 81 students. The USA Biolympiad continued online for over 7000 students. The Teacher Enrichment Program was inaugurated in Virginia and sponsored for

rural and urban teachers to better their skills to nurture students to scientific and technological careers. This past year, the Lyceum Program for students in underrepresented communities was virtually inaugurated in Virginia. The Advisory and Consultancy Program was introduced as a CEE revenue program for students seeking assistance to garner admission to leading schools. It began with five students. The Center had not yet established relations with Kazakhstan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, or Taiwan for representation at RSI.

In 2023, I proudly report that RSI hosted 100 fine young scholars at MIT this past summer. USABO had approximately 10,000 students this year to participate in the online competition with Finals at Marymount University. The Teacher Enrichment Program has been hosted in 12 states, and it is planned that there will be many more virtual and live TEP sessions throughout the U.S. Lyceums reached thousands of students online from throughout the U.S. and many nations. Both TEP and Lyceums will host a regional session in February for approximately 100 teachers in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, at an all-day STEM program. The Advisory and Consultancy has helped students to be admitted to top colleges and universities, and often an A&C international student is the only one from his or her nation gaining admission to an Ivy.

Progress in CEE's programs has been dramatic. A special Board of Trustees Committee with CEE staff is promoting diversity in CEE's programs without lowering standards of excellence. CEE continues its efforts to close the academic gaps among groups of secondary school students. Alumni have contributed to CEE's growth with participation in webinars, panel discussions, volunteering for special projects and with donations. Alumni funding campaigns have increased 44% over 5 years, and the CEE endowment increased 89.62% over 5 years to \$8,133,974.57.

While the Center for Excellence in Education continues its mission to help assure STEM leadership in the global community, my concern grows that academics is being challenged with less freedom of speech to confront the myriad challenges in controversial STEM issues. The clarion call to "speak your mind"

has become a call to remain "silent to protect your professional future." Grades, excellence, merit, competitions, winners and losers are now often defined as racist, bigoted, and homophobic. To not make the mark designated as top is often defined as disparate impact. As Thomas Sowell, noted economist said, "The social justice vision starts off by reducing the search for causation to a search for blame. And for so much that happens, there is no blame." Academics suffers when speech is stifled and blame assigned.

I encourage alumni of CEE's Research Science Institute and USA Biolympiad to be mindful of the dangers in closing off conversation and stifling the search for truth. Alumni of the Center's programs have the brains to lead in STEM disciplines related to science and technology, and to make this world a better one. They must stand up for common sense and make improvements to the structure of this remarkable nation. But alumni must quiet those in their tracks that espouse this nation's transformation.

Why is CEE almost alone in espousing academic excellence without lowering universally held indices for merit? And why is there even a need to defend speech – all speech?

The challenge is for all of us. Will this nation heed the clarion call for free speech and applaud it, or will this nation be led by highly educated demagogues – elitists with no concept of the integral relationship between free speech and a democratic republic?

CEE stands firmly for a culture of understanding and tolerance for all thinking. The Center needs public commitment for involvement and continuing support. CEE must stand as a beacon for freedom of speech for leadership and meritocracy in science, technology, and business.

Joann P. DiGennaro

President

Center for Excellence in Education

RSI (CONTINUED)

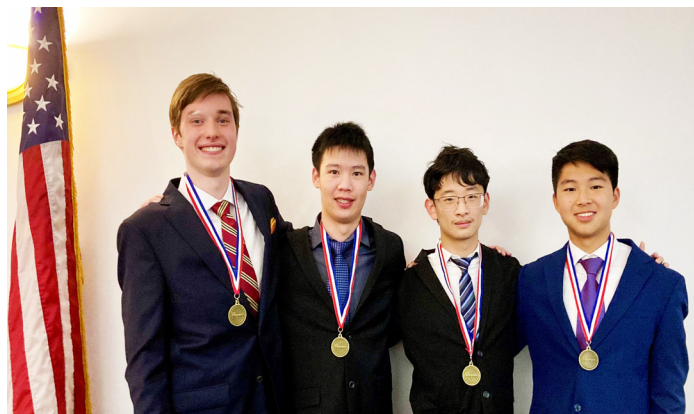
Congratulations to those selected for the top five oral presentations and the top five written presentations chosen from 100 participants by an eminent panel of judges. Each of the award winners received a \$1,000 scholarship award from Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc.



Minh Nguyen, a student from Hus High School for Gifted Students in Hanoi, Vietnam, was chosen by his RSI peers for the top honor—Rickoid of the Year—at the RSI. The award recognizes academic acumen, leadership, and personal demeanor, and is named for the late **Admiral**

H.G. Rickover, father of the nuclear Navy and co-founder of CEE. More information about RSI is at www.cee.org/programs/research-science-institute.

USA BIOLYMPIAD



CEE's 2023 USA Biolympiad (USABO) National Finals were held June 2-16 at Marymount University on its Arlington, Virginia campus. Four students earned the honor to represent the U.S. at the 34th International Biology Olympiad (IBO), a worldwide competition comprised of student teams from over 80 countries. It was hosted July 3-11 in the United Arab Emirates. Gold medalist **Yufei Chen**, University High School, Irvine, CA, earned the highest score in the world! **Kaiden Zida Wu**, Thomas Jefferson School of Science & Technology, Alexandria, VA, also earned a gold medal. **Damon V. Gurvich**, Lexington High School, Lexington, MA, and **Richard Zhu**, North Hollywood Senior High School, North Hollywood, CA, earned silver medals. Preparations are now underway for the 2024 USABO. More information is at www.cee.org/programs/usa-biolympiad.

TEACHER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM



Teacher Enrichment Program

This fall CEE's Teacher Enrichment Program (TEP) is hosting virtual Bite of Science workshops and College & Career Panels for STEM teachers and students. Recent topics have included STEM in aerodynamics, agricultural biotechnology, healthcare, medicine, and oceanography. All the recordings are available for free on CEE's YouTube Channel.

TEP organizes exciting, cost-free STEM workshops for underserved rural and urban high school teachers to take back to their classrooms. TEP links STEM educators across the country with professional resources and connections to advance their careers and to directly benefit their students. The program has reached more than 600,000 underserved rural and urban students to nurture STEM careers. More information about TEP is at www.cee.org/programs/teacher-enrichment-program.

STEM LYCEUMS



STEM Lyceums

EXPLORE YOUR POTENTIAL IN STEM

Through its STEM Lyceums program, CEE is conducting cost-free webinars to connect underserved high school students with the Center's ecosystem of top STEM industry professionals and innovators. CEE's STEM Lyceums is a virtual club that builds high school STEM communities and engages students in discussions and explorations of STEM concepts and STEM career pathways, provided at no cost to students. Meetings foster critical thinking skills, encourage excitement for science, and prepare students to enter STEM careers. To date, topics have included aerospace, biomedical engineering, clean/renewable energy, data science, and cybersecurity genomics, health sciences, music, nuclear engineering, pharmaceuticals, smart devices in healthcare, and zoology. More information about STEM Lyceums is at www.cee.org/programs/stem-lyceums.

40TH ANNIVERSARY (CONTINUED)



Friday's events included a fascinating and informative panel discussion on the future of the U.S. nuclear submarine program. It was a fitting way to honor CEE co-founder **Admiral Hyman G. Rickover**, father of the nuclear navy. Attendees learned, among other things, why nuclear subs are engineering marvels and useful for U.S. naval leadership. The panel was moderated by **Justin Ricketts** (RSI '22), student at Harvard University. Saturday morning brought together three Nobel Laureates for a panel discussion: **Dr. Abhijit Banerjee**, Ford Foundation International Professor of Economics, MIT, 2019 Nobel Laureate, Economics; **Dr. William G. Kaelin, Jr.**, Sidney Farber Professor of Medicine Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School and Investigator, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, 2019 Nobel Laureate, (Physiology or Medicine); and **Dr. Wolfgang Ketterle**, John D. MacArthur Professor of Physics, Director, MIT-Harvard Center for Ultracold Atoms; 2001 Nobel Laureate, Physics. The Nobel Prize winners were humble and inspiring. They also had no trouble explaining their high-level discoveries to a lecture hall full of individuals who aspire to win Nobel Prizes. The panel was moderated by **Danielle Paulson** (RSI '20), student at Harvard.

The Nobel Laureates panel was followed by a panel on business featuring CEE Trustees **Tom Leighton**, Founder of Akamai; **Pranav Adani**, Adani Group of India; and **Nader Hariri** (RSI '94), Chairman and CEO, Gateways Venture Holding. **Helen Han** (RSI '05), Founder of Piqed, was also a panelist. The panel was moderated by **Nina Vasan** (RSI '01), Angel Investor and Founder and Executive Director at Brainstorm: The Stanford Lab for Mental Health Innovation.

The AI and Our Future panel was moderated by CEE Trustee **Arvind Parthasarathi** (RSI '90), Founder & CEO, CYGNVS Inc. (left). The panel featured **Apoorva Panidapu** (RSI '22), Stanford; **Michael Huang** (RSI '22), MIT; and **Sean Kanuck** (RSI '88), Director of the Future Conflict and Cyber Security program at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

On Saturday afternoon CEE Talks presented by CEE program alumni highlighted their special expertise in both STEM and non-STEM fields, from Aboriginal art to a recent breakthrough concerning Huntington's disease. Boiling complex subjects down to ten-minute talks is an enormous challenge, but the speakers were equal to the task.



*CEE Trustee **Dr. Frederick Y. Chen, MD, PhD** (RSI '86) at the podium along with **Scott A. Schaffer** (RSI '84) and his family of singers at the 40th Anniversary Celebration dinner.*

WHERE ARE CEE ALUMNI NOW?



Alok Bhushan (RSI '97) is CFO at Turing.com, an AI-powered platform that matches companies with engineering talent. He earned a B.A. in Economics and an M.S. in Computer Science, at Harvard.



Ken Brewer, PhD (RSI '06) is a Computational Biologist at Profound Therapeutics. He earned a B.S. in Chemistry at Harvard and M.Phil. and PhD in biochemistry, biophysics at Yale.



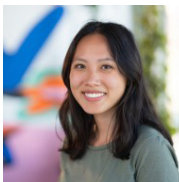
Madison Capps (RSI '04) is Engineering Manager at Airbnb. She previously was an engineer for C3 AI. She earned a B.S. at MIT in brain and cognitive sciences.



Sarah Don (RSI '08) is Fuel Engineer at Fortum in Finland. She earned a B.S. and M.S. in Nuclear Science and Engineering at MIT. She also studied at University of Massachusetts Lowell.



Adam Friedman, MD, PhD (RSI '96) is President, Corporate Strategy & Business Development, at Scorpion Therapeutics. He earned a B.A. in molecular biology at Princeton and MD/PhD at Harvard Medical School.



Annie Hu (RSI '13) is Engineering Manager at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. She earned a Bachelor's in Applied Mathematics and an MS in Computer Science at Stanford.



Grace Huang, MD (RSI '90) is Dean for Faculty Affairs at Harvard Medical School. She completed her undergrad in English and biological sciences at Stanford and her MD at Washington University in St. Louis.



Ravi Jagadeesan, PhD (RSI '13) is Assistant Professor of Economics, Stanford. He has a BA in Mathematics, an MA in Statistics, and a PhD in Business Economics from Harvard.



Jesse Oehrlein, PhD (RSI '11) is an Assistant Math professor at Fitchburg State University. She earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at Franklin W. Olin College

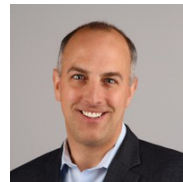
of Engineering, and an M.Phil, MS, and PhD in applied mathematics at Columbia University.



Bertrand Stone (RSI '13) is a PhD student in mathematics at UCLA and a composer. He graduated from MIT with a double major in mathematics and music composition.



Anna Thomas (RSI '13) is a PhD student in Computer Science at Stanford. She earned a bachelor's in Mathematics with a minor in Computer Science at Stanford and a Master of Advanced Study, Statistics, from University of Cambridge.



Karl Wirth (RSI '88) is Chief Product and Technology Officer at Treasure Data. He co-founded Evergage, now a Salesforce company. He earned an A.B. in Physics from Harvard University.

CEE ALUMNI EVENTS



RSI and USABO alums met recently at events across the U.S. to enjoy camaraderie, food, and networking. California Bay area alumni met on Saturday, September 9, 2023, in Napa, CA. CEE Trustee **Josie Haspel** (RSI '01, Counselor '02) and **Dan Haspel** (RSI '98, TA '02, AD '04) hosted the event in their home. CEE's Midwest Rickoids and friends gathered in Chicago on Saturday, September 9, 2023, at RPM On the Water in downtown Chicago, IL, hosted by **Helen Han** (RSI '05). The Center's New York City Rickoids gathered on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at Ramp Business Corporation, New York, NY. **Karim Atiyeh** (RSI '06) hosted the event. CEE alumni also met on Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at The Field Club of Greenwich, CT, hosted by CEE Trustee **Munir Javeri** (RSI '95).

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Markets

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Center for Excellence in Education

7918 Jones Branch Drive, Suite 700
McLean, VA 22102
www.cee.org



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Tom Flavell, Communications Manager
(703) 448-9062 ext. 237 or tflavell@cee.org

CEE ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

CEE's Annual Rickoid Holiday Party is always a great fun evening to enjoy camaraderie of old and new friends, with lots and lots of turkey, ham, linguini, and Italian desserts. This year the party is on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023, starting at 7 p.m. at Ms. D's home located at 11740 Quay Road, Oakton, VA 22124. Alumni and friends of the Center typically fly in from all over the world and many stay overnight. RSVP [online](#) by Dec. 14, 2023. Contact Maite at (703) 448-9062 or maite@cee.org with any questions.



ABOUT CEE

The Center for Excellence in Education, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit, was founded in 1983 by the late **Admiral H.G. Rickover** and **Joann P. DiGennaro**, President of the Center. The Center's mission is to nurture high school and university scholars to careers of excellence and leadership in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and to encourage collaboration between and among scientific and technological leaders in the global community. CEE sponsors Research Science Institute (RSI), USA Biolympiad (USABO), Teacher Enrichment Program (TEP), and STEM Lyceums. CEE provides these programs cost-free to participants. Follow CEE on social media:

