

Newsletter

**2027 Hill Prizes**

**Last Chance to Apply**

Apply by Monday, June 1, 6 p.m. CT

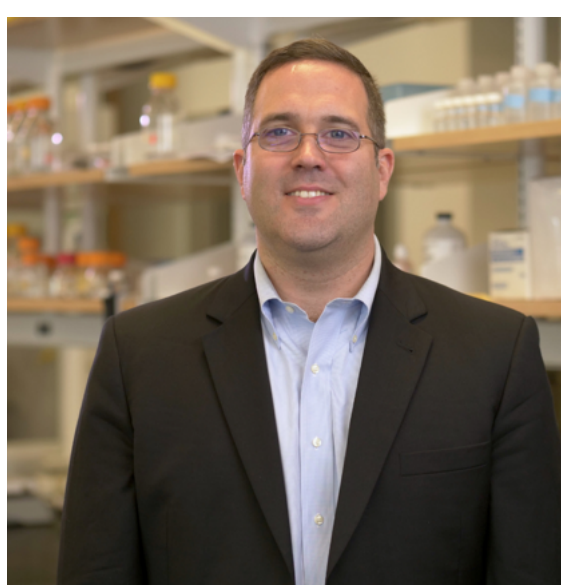


The deadline to apply for the **2027 Hill Prizes** is here – applications are due this **Monday, June 1, by 6 p.m. CT**. Don't miss this opportunity to accelerate your next big breakthrough and receive \$500,000 in direct funding for high-risk, high-reward innovations from Lyda Hill Philanthropies. The prizes support bold research across seven categories with strong potential for real-world impact. They are open to Texas-based researchers and innovators 15 years or more past their first full-time position. [Learn More](#)



**Texas Welcomes Four NAS Members Elected in 2026**

TAMEST congratulates three new members and one current member on their election to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in 2026. They were among 120 members and 25 international members elected in recognition of their distinguished and continuing achievements in original research. Notable among the elections is TAMEST Member **Ralph J. DeBerardinis, M.D., Ph.D. (NAM, NAS)**, UT Southwestern Medical Center, who is the seventh past Edith and Peter O'Donnell Award Recipient to be elected to multiple academies. TAMEST will celebrate these elections and welcome other new members at the opening reception of the TAMEST 2027 Annual Conference in Houston, Texas. [Read More](#)



**TAMEST O'Donnell Awards 20th Anniversary Series: 2020 O'Donnell Award Recipient in Engineering Jeffrey D. Rimer, Ph.D., University of Houston**

**Jeffrey D. Rimer, Ph.D., University of Houston (UH)**, has dedicated his career to understanding how crystals form and using that knowledge to design materials with real-world impact. In 2020, he received the Edith and Peter O'Donnell Award in Engineering from TAMEST. As TAMEST celebrates the 20th anniversary of the O'Donnell Awards, Dr. Rimer reflects on the growing role of interdisciplinary research in addressing global challenges and the importance of the O'Donnell Awards and TAMEST Protégé Program in shaping the next generation of scientists and engineers in Texas. [Read More](#)

**Featured Photo**



**2026 Mary Beth Maddox Award Lecture Highlights Breakthrough Cancer Research at Baylor College of Medicine**

As part of the **2026 Mary Beth Maddox Award Lecture Series**, **2026 Mary Beth Maddox Award and Lectureship Recipient Maralice Conacci-Sorrell, Ph.D., of UT Southwestern Medical Center**, delivered a lecture on Wednesday, May 13, at Baylor College of Medicine. Hosted in partnership with the Molecular and Cellular Biology Seminar Series and the Dan L Duncan Comprehensive Cancer Center, the lecture drew 60 participants attending in person and 48 joining online. Dr. Conacci-Sorrell highlighted her groundbreaking research on how cancer cells use nutrients to fuel tumor growth and innovative therapeutic strategies to target difficult-to-treat cancers. During her visit, Dr. Conacci-Sorrell also met with Baylor College of Medicine faculty and trainees for scientific discussions and networking opportunities focused on advancing cancer research. The **Mary Beth Maddox Award and Lectureship** promotes cutting-edge cancer research by bringing award recipients to institutions across Texas with NIH National Cancer Institute-designated cancer centers to lecture and network. [Learn More](#)

**Opportunities**



**TAMEST IS HIRING**  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENT  
PROGRAM MANAGER

TAMEST is growing our team in Austin, Texas, and we are looking for outstanding professionals to help advance our mission of supporting Texas innovation and research. We are currently hiring for two roles: an **Associate Director of Events and Engagement** and a **Program Manager**. If you know individuals who are driven and would excel in these positions, please share these opportunities with them and encourage them to apply.

**TAMEST In The News**

- Houston Public Media:** NASA Astronaut Among 2026 Texas Aviation Hall of Fame Inductees, **TAMEST Member Bonnie J. Dunbar, Ph.D. (NAE)**, Texas A&M University
- Oxy:** Occidental Announces CEO Succession, **TAMEST Member Vicki A. Hollub (NAE)**, Occidental Petroleum Corporation
- SciTechDaily:** How Quantum Mechanics Went from Baffling Theory to Revolutionizing Modern Technology, **TAMEST Member Marlan O. Scully, Ph.D. (NAS)**, Texas A&M University
- Bioengineer:** Discovering a Spectrum of Quantum Phases in Semiconductor Moiré Superlattices, **TAMEST Member Allan H. MacDonald, Ph.D. (NAS)**, The University of Texas at Austin
- TIME:** TIME100 Philanthropy 2026: Lyda Hill, Science as a Solution, 2025 Kay Bailey Hutchison Distinguished Service Award Recipient Lyda Hill and Lyda Hill Philanthropies
- SciTechDaily:** Researchers Discover Boosting a Single Protein Helps the Brain Fight Alzheimer's, **2024 O'Donnell Award in Medicine Recipient Benjamin Deneen, Ph.D.**, Baylor College of Medicine

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**Member Briefs**

**In Memoriam:**



**Richard A. Tapia, Ph.D. (NAE)**  
1939 – 2026

Rice University

TAMEST (Texas Academy of Medicine, Engineering, Science and Technology)

TAMEST mourns the loss of beloved TAMEST Member **Richard A. Tapia, Ph.D. (NAE)**, Rice University. He was a pioneering mathematician and an early TAMEST board member. Dr. Tapia's leadership in research, diversity and mentorship strengthened Texas science and engineering. His work earned him international recognition in computational mathematics and established him as a national leader in expanding opportunities for underrepresented minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). His influence will continue to shape computational mathematics and broaden participation in STEM for decades to come. Dr. Tapia's vision, generosity and unwavering commitment leave an enduring legacy on Texas research, on TAMEST and on the many lives he touched. [Read More](#)

**Luis Rafael Herrera-Estrella, Ph.D., Elected as Fellow of the Royal Society**

Over 90 outstanding researchers from across the world have this year been elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society (FRS), the UK's National Academy of Sciences. This year's cohort includes pioneers and leaders across a range of scientific fields, from astronomy and cancer research to mathematics and biotechnology. Among the newly elected Fellows is TAMEST Member **Luis Rafael Herrera-Estrella, Ph.D. (NAS, FRS)**, Texas Tech University. Dr. Herrera-Estrella is one of the foremost plant molecular biologists in the world and is a pioneer in the development of plant genetic engineering. [Read More](#)

**UT Southwestern Molecular Biologist Kim Orth, Ph.D., Elected to American Academy of Arts and Sciences**

TAMEST Board Secretary **Kim Orth, Ph.D. (NAS)**, UT Southwestern Medical Center, has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, one of the most prestigious honorary societies in the world. Dr. Orth is internationally known for advancing the understanding of basic biochemical mechanisms underlying many bacterial infections. Her research, conducted over 25 years at UT Southwestern, has identified new ways that invading bacteria hijack and deregulate a cell's signaling systems. [Read More](#)

**Jennifer Wargo, M.D., Elected Fellow of the American Association for Cancer Research Academy**

TAMEST Member **Jennifer Wargo, M.D. (NAM)**, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, has been elected to the 2026 class of Fellows of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Academy in recognition of her pioneering work to define interactions between the microbiome, cancer biology and treatment response. Dr. Wargo, who joined UT MD Anderson in 2013, has devoted her career to uncovering mechanisms responsible for regulating response or resistance to cancer treatments, including targeted therapies and immunotherapies. [Read More](#)

**Addressing Infant Mortality and Maternal Health Disparities in Rural Areas: A Webinar Series**

The National Academies recently hosted a public webinar featuring TAMEST Member **Catherine Y. Spong, M.D. (NAM)**, UT Southwestern Medical Center, that explored strategies for improving maternal and infant health in rural areas of the United States. Four hundred attendees learned about evidence-informed solutions for diagnosis and care spanning the period before pregnancy, throughout prenatal and perinatal care, and during the postpartum and early infancy stages, with attention to system capacity, access to services, policy approaches and the community conditions that influence health outcomes in rural settings. [Read More](#)

[Read More](#)

**About TAMEST**

TAMEST was co-founded in 2004 by the Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison and Nobel Laureates Michael S. Brown, M.D., and Richard E. Smalley, Ph.D. With more than 360 members, eight Nobel Laureates and 23 member institutions, TAMEST is composed of the Texas-based members of the three National Academies (National Academy of Medicine, National Academy of Engineering and National Academy of Sciences) and other honorific organizations. We bring together the state's brightest minds in medicine, engineering, science and technology to foster collaboration, and to advance research, innovation and business in Texas.

TAMEST's unique interdisciplinary model has become an effective recruitment tool for top research and development centers across Texas. Since our founding, more than 350 TAMEST members have been inducted into the National Academies or relocated to Texas.

**TAMEST Member Institutions**



TAMEST recognizes members of the Founders of the Endowment and the Legacy Circle, whose extraordinary commitment ensures sustainable funds to continue the mission of promoting excellence in science and technology.

**Founders of the Endowment**  
Anadarko Foundation • AT&T • BNSF Foundation • ConocoPhillips  
Energy Future Holdings • Edith and Peter O'Donnell • Temple-Inland  
The USAA Foundation

**Legacy Circle**  
The Eugene McDermott Foundation