



Science & Technology Medal Candidates

Annually awarded to a New Jersey leader or leaders of a technology-based company or a university for extraordinary performance in bringing an impactful innovation to the marketplace.

Previous winners include 2025 Robert Cohen of Stryker, 2024 Dr. Brian Kernighan of Princeton University and Bell Labs, 2023 Dr. Victor Lawrence of Bell Labs and Stevens Institute of Technology, 2022 Dr. David MacMillan of Princeton University, 2021 Dr. Macaya Douguih and Remo Colarusso of Janssen, and 2020 Dr. Joachim Messing of Rutgers University.



Mike Intrator, Brian Venturo, Brannin McBee, and Peter Salanki
Co-Founders, CoreWeave

Mike Intrator, Brian Venturo, Brannin McBee, and Peter Salanki, co-founders of CoreWeave, have built one of the leading GPU-accelerated cloud platforms supporting the rapid growth of artificial intelligence. Their infrastructure enables advanced computing across industries including healthcare, finance, and scientific research, positioning CoreWeave as a key player in the global AI ecosystem.

The company's impact is particularly significant in New Jersey. Headquartered in Livingston, CoreWeave has committed billions of dollars to develop large-scale AI infrastructure in the state, including the transformation of a former pharmaceutical R&D campus in Kenilworth into a high-performance data center. This investment is creating high-skilled jobs, attracting additional capital, and strengthening New Jersey's position in advanced computing. CoreWeave is also contributing to the state's broader innovation ecosystem through partnerships that support emerging AI companies and technologies.

Through rapid growth, large-scale infrastructure investment, and a clear focus on enabling next-generation innovation, CoreWeave's co-founders have delivered a commercially successful platform with measurable impact both globally and within New Jersey.



Jordan Schecter, MD
Multiple Myeloma DAS leader and
Inventor, Carvykti
Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine

Schecter, Multiple Myeloma Disease Area Stronghold Leader and inventor of Carvykti at Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine, has played a central role in advancing CAR-T cell therapy for multiple myeloma.

Carvykti (ciltacabtagene autoleucl) is a personalized therapy that engineers a patient's own immune cells to target cancer, delivering strong clinical outcomes for patients with relapsed or refractory disease. Dr. Schecter's leadership helped move this complex science from clinical development to an approved and commercially available treatment.

New Jersey is central to this impact. Carvykti is manufactured at scale in Raritan, where approximately \$500 million has been invested to expand one of the largest cell therapy manufacturing facilities in the United States, with capacity to treat up to 10,000 patients annually. Additional manufacturing in Morris Plains further supports growing demand.

Through the development and large-scale production of Carvykti, Dr. Schecter has helped advance a new class of cancer treatment while strengthening New Jersey's position as a leader in cell and gene therapy innovation.



Stephen K. Burley, D. Phil., MD

Henry Rutgers Chair and University Professor, Founding Director of the Institute for Quantitative Biomedicine, and Director of the RCSB Protein Data Bank at Rutgers University

Stephen Burley currently serves as Henry Rutgers Chair and University Professor, Founding Director of the Institute for Quantitative Biomedicine, and Director of the RCSB Protein Data Bank at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. He is also a Member of the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, where he Co-Leads the Cancer Pharmacology Research Program. Burley is an expert in structural biology, proteomics, bioinformatics, structure/fragment based drug discovery, and clinical medicine/oncology.

From 2008 to 2012, Burley was a Distinguished Lilly Research Scholar in Lilly Research Laboratories. Prior to joining Lilly, Burley served as the Chief Scientific Officer and Senior Vice President of SGX Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a publicly traded biotechnology company that was acquired by Lilly in 2008. Until 2002, Burley was the Richard M. and Isabel P. Furlaud Professor at The Rockefeller University and an Investigator in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

He has authored/coauthored more than 280 scholarly scientific articles. Following undergraduate training in applied mathematics and physics, Burley received an M.D. degree from Harvard Medical School in the joint Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology Program and, as a Rhodes Scholar, received a D.Phil. in Structural Biology from Oxford University. He trained in internal medicine at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, and did post-doctoral work with Gregory A. Petsko at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Nobel Laureate William N. Lipscomb, Jr. at Harvard University. With William J. Rutter and others at the University of California San Francisco and Rockefeller, Burley co-founded Prospect Genomics, Inc., which was acquired by SGX in 2001. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and of the New York Academy of Sciences, and recipient of a Doctor of Science (Honoris causa) from his alma mater the University of Western Ontario.



Visionary Award Candidates

Annually awarded to an individual who showcases exceptional and transformational leadership in uniting industry, academia and the state in pursuit of creating a research-based economy in New Jersey.

Previous winners include 2025 John Crowley of the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO), 2024 Chris Paladino of DevCo and Helix, 2023 Robert C. Garrett of Hackensack Meridian Health, 2022 Judith Persichilli of the New Jersey Department of Health, 2021 Kenneth Frazier of Merck & Co., and 2020 Roger Perlmutter of Merck & Co.



Ralph Larossa
Chairman, President & CEO, PSEG

Ralph LaRossa, Chairman, President, and CEO of Public Service Enterprise Group, has demonstrated transformational leadership in advancing the infrastructure that underpins New Jersey’s research-based economy.

Under his leadership, PSEG is executing a \$15–18 billion capital investment strategy focused on grid modernization, resiliency, and clean energy. Central to this is PSEG’s nuclear fleet, which provides nearly half of New Jersey’s electricity and approximately 85–90% of its carbon-free power—delivering the reliable, low-emissions energy required to support advanced research, manufacturing, and emerging technologies. LaRossa has also strengthened collaboration across industry, academia, and government, aligning energy strategy with the state’s broader innovation and economic development goals. These efforts ensure that New Jersey’s energy infrastructure can meet the growing demands of sectors such as AI, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing.

By pairing large-scale infrastructure investment with cross-sector partnership, LaRossa is helping to create the conditions necessary for sustained innovation, reinforcing New Jersey’s position as a leader in building a resilient, research-driven economy.



Bob Carrigan
CEO, Audible

Bob Carrigan, CEO of Audible, has demonstrated transformational leadership in expanding the role of a technology company as a driver of New Jersey’s innovation economy.

Under his leadership, Audible has deepened its commitment to Newark while positioning the city as a model for inclusive, innovation-driven growth across the state. The company generates an estimated \$2 billion in annual economic impact in Newark and continues to invest in initiatives that support entrepreneurship, workforce development, and small business growth. Carrigan has strengthened partnerships across government, academia, and industry—working closely with city and state leaders to align corporate investment with economic development priorities, while supporting programs that connect local students and emerging talent to careers in technology and media. These efforts help build a pipeline between New Jersey’s educational institutions and its growing innovation sectors.

By scaling a model that integrates corporate leadership with public and academic partners, Carrigan is helping to redefine how companies contribute to a research- and innovation-driven economy, reinforcing New Jersey’s role as a center for next-generation industries.



Amy Mansue
CEO, Inspira Health

Amy Mansue, CEO of Inspira Health, has demonstrated transformational leadership in positioning South Jersey as a critical contributor to New Jersey's research and innovation economy.

Under her leadership, Inspira has expanded its role as a clinical research hub, strengthening its Clinical Research Office and advancing participation in FDA-guided clinical trials across areas such as oncology, infectious disease, and chronic care. Through partnerships with pharmaceutical companies, academic institutions, and national research organizations, Mansue has brought together industry, academia, and public health stakeholders to expand access to clinical research and accelerate the development of new treatments.

Mansue has also prioritized workforce development, with Inspira supporting more than 280 medical residents and fellows in programs that integrate clinical training with research and evidence-based care. These efforts are building a pipeline of skilled healthcare professionals equipped to support the state's growing life sciences sector.

By aligning healthcare delivery with research, education, and industry collaboration, Mansue is expanding access to innovation beyond traditional academic centers and ensuring that all regions of the state play a role in New Jersey's research-driven economy.



Educator of the Year Candidates

Annually awarded to an individual for their achievements in the advancement of science and technology education and workforce development across New Jersey.

Previous winners include 2025 Brian Strom, M.D. of Rutgers University, 2024 Dr. Anthony Lowman of Rowan University, 2023 Sen. Dr. Andrew Zwicker of the Princeton Plasma Physics Lab, 2022 Sen. Teresa Ruiz, 2021 Comcast, and 2020 Dr. Dawood Farahi of Kean University.



Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
President, Kean University

Dr. Lamont O. Repollet is a nationally recognized leader in education, policy, and institutional transformation, with over 30 years of experience spanning public and private pre-K to post-secondary education. Renowned for his expertise in reimagining education, Dr. Repollet has spearheaded groundbreaking initiatives that enhance student success, improve institutional culture, and elevate academic outcomes. His leadership is defined by a commitment to innovation and access, positioning him as a leading voice in shaping the future of education. As the President of Kean University, a distinguished R2 University and New Jersey’s Urban Research University, Dr. Repollet leads a diverse, majority-minority institution with over 18,500 students, a global presence in Wenzhou, China, and an annual operating budget of \$250 million. He is the first Black President in the university’s history, joining an elite group of only 14% of Black college and university presidents nationwide.



Aaron R. Fichtner and Catherine Starghill
President / Vice President, NJ Council of Community Colleges

The Council brings together the state’s Community Colleges to build a world-class, flexible higher education and workforce development system that can respond to the needs of local communities and employers while having statewide reach and impact. The Council promotes innovation and policy changes to help NJ’s Community Colleges in their efforts to achieve academic, social, and economic mobility for all residents. The Council’s New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development builds statewide industry, education, and labor partnerships that align education and training with the needs of a changing economy.



Dena K. Seidel, Ph.D.

Co-Instructor & Research Analyst, Rutgers,
State University of New Jersey

Dena Seidel has demonstrated exceptional leadership in advancing science and technology education through an innovative, research-driven approach that connects students directly with real-world STEM practice.

As the creator of the Science-in-Action Video Storytelling Model and co-founder of the Rutgers Immersive Learning Through Science Storytelling Research Lab, Seidel has built a scalable, experiential learning framework that integrates students into active scientific research teams. Through this model, students across New Jersey gain hands-on exposure to fields including climate science, public health, engineering, and sustainable agriculture, developing both technical knowledge and critical science communication skills.

The impact on workforce development is clear and measurable. Peer-reviewed research shows statistically significant gains in STEM knowledge, science identity, and communication confidence among participants, with 100% of students expressing increased interest in STEM fields. Many alumni have gone on to careers in medicine, research, environmental policy, and science communication, strengthening New Jersey's talent pipeline.

Seidel's work also extends beyond the classroom, reaching global audiences through widely distributed science films while increasing public trust in science—an essential component of a modern, research-driven economy.

Through a model that is immersive, scalable, and nationally recognized, Seidel is advancing STEM education and building the next generation of New Jersey's innovation workforce.



Catalyst Award Candidate

Annually awarded to an individual or organization who significantly supports the innovation ecosystem within New Jersey.

Previous winners include 2025 Dr. Craig Arnold of Princeton University and 2024 Judith Sheft of the New Jersey Commission on Science, Technology & Innovation.



Atam P Dhawan, Ph.D.

Chief Strategic Innovation Officer and SVP-Research, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Atam Dhawan has played a transformative role in strengthening New Jersey’s innovation ecosystem by building scalable, cross-sector platforms that connect academia, industry, and government to accelerate research translation and commercialization.

As a leader at New Jersey Institute of Technology, Dr. Dhawan founded the Center for Translational Research (CTR), a National Science Foundation-supported initiative backed by approximately \$7 million in funding. Through CTR, he has established a comprehensive model that moves ideas from early-stage research to market-ready solutions, supporting seed funding programs, industry partnerships, and startup formation.

Since its launch, CTR has supported more than 26 translational research projects, contributed to the creation of multiple startup companies, and facilitated 18 industry-university collaborations. Dr. Dhawan has also convened over 2,500 stakeholders through workshops and partnership events, bringing together leaders from across New Jersey’s universities, corporations, state agencies, and community organizations.

His leadership extends nationally, with NJIT serving as the coordinating center for the NSF ART Network, connecting 17 institutions to advance research translation across the country.

Through sustained investment in partnerships, talent development, and commercialization pathways, Dr. Dhawan is accelerating innovation and strengthening New Jersey’s position as a leader in research-driven economic growth.



Emerging Technology Award

Annually awarded to a New Jersey individual, team or organization whose early stage inventions or innovations have the potential to make a significant impact on the marketplace.

Previous winners include 2025 Nathaniel Banks and Yidian Liu of PolyGone Systems and 2024 Dr. Olivier Loudig of Hackensack Meridian Health.



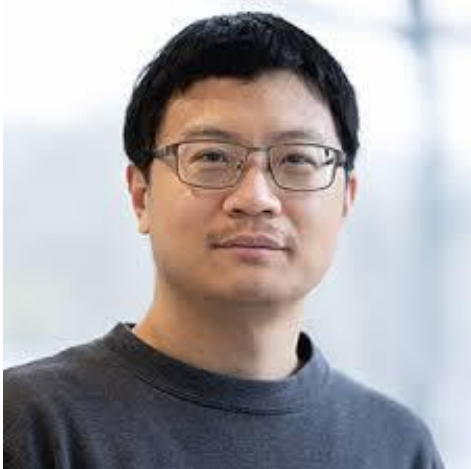
Kathryn Carpenter
President, Cecilia Energy

Kathryn Carpenter, President of Cecilia Energy, is advancing a breakthrough technology with the potential to significantly impact both the global materials market and New Jersey’s clean technology economy.

Cecilia Energy has developed a proprietary process that converts hard-to-recycle plastic waste into high-value outputs, including clean hydrogen and advanced carbon materials. By transforming low-value waste into inputs for energy, manufacturing, and advanced materials industries, the company is addressing a critical gap in the multi-billion-dollar global plastics and circular economy markets. This approach has the potential to unlock new revenue streams from waste while reducing reliance on traditional fossil-based inputs.

The company’s progress in 2025 demonstrates strong commercial momentum. Cecilia scaled its pilot system to sustained operations, secured its first customer order with NASA, and built a pipeline of commercial partners across industry and research institutions. With \$4.7 million raised to date—including support from New Jersey clean tech programs—Cecilia is advancing toward a commercial demonstration unit and broader market entry.

Based in New Jersey, Cecilia Energy is contributing to the state’s growing leadership in climate technology and advanced materials. By turning waste into valuable industrial inputs at scale, Carpenter and her team are positioning Cecilia to deliver both significant economic value and environmental impact in the marketplace.



Yongfeng Zhang
Associate Professor, Rutgers University

Yongfeng Zhang, Associate Professor at Rutgers University, is advancing a foundational technology with the potential to reshape the future of artificial intelligence systems and the global software market.

Dr. Zhang is the inventor of the AI Agent Operating System (AIOS), the first operating system purpose-built for large language model (LLM)-based AI agents. By embedding AI directly into the system architecture, AIOS enables efficient coordination of large-scale, autonomous agents—addressing a critical bottleneck in next-generation computing. In testing, the system has demonstrated up to a 2.1× increase in execution speed and a 100%+ reduction in latency under high-demand, multi-agent environments.

The market implications are significant. As industries rapidly adopt AI-driven workflows, AIOS provides the infrastructure needed to scale agent-based systems across enterprise, telecommunications, and edge computing environments—positioning it within a projected \$150 billion global market for AI orchestration technologies. Early adoption is already underway, with thousands of developers contributing to an open-source ecosystem and dozens of applications built on the platform. Based in New Jersey, this work reinforces the state’s leadership in AI research and commercialization, translating academic innovation into a scalable technology with clear potential to impact the global marketplace.



Rik Mehta
CEO, Lactiga

Rik Mehta, CEO of Lactiga, is advancing a novel immunotherapy platform with the potential to significantly impact the treatment of autoimmune and inflammatory diseases.

Lactiga’s approach centers on IgA antibodies, an underutilized area of immunology that targets immune activity at mucosal surfaces. By addressing disease pathways that are not effectively reached by existing IgG-based therapies, this technology has the potential to expand the treatment landscape for conditions with high unmet need. The market opportunity is substantial. Autoimmune and inflammatory diseases affect millions of patients globally and represent a multi-billion-dollar therapeutic market. A successful IgA-based platform could not only improve patient outcomes but also introduce a new class of biologics, creating opportunities for broad clinical application and commercial scalability.

Under Mehta’s leadership, Lactiga has secured early funding and validation, positioning the company to advance this platform toward clinical development and potential commercialization.

If successful, Lactiga’s technology could reshape how immune-mediated diseases are treated, offering both clinical and commercial impact across a large and growing market.