

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

# MENSA<sup>®</sup> FOUNDATION

RESEARCH | EDUCATION | RECOGNITION | SCHOLARSHIPS



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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



## YOUR TIME, TALENT, DOLLARS BEAR FRUIT IN MYRIAD WAYS

By Marie Mayer, Foundation President  
[president@mensafoundation.org](mailto:president@mensafoundation.org)

*Small acts of kindness can make a difference in other people's lives more than we can imagine.*

—Catherine Pulsifer

THIS QUOTE REMINDED ME of people who are there for us throughout our lives. Sometimes the strongest and fondest memories are those when someone's assistance was unexpected. Maybe a friend's parent helped you achieve a unique challenge by providing logistical and emotional support when you needed it. Or you had (or wish you had) a teacher who went the extra mile to help you and other students. Maybe they helped you access books in the "big" school library because you had read everything in your classroom and were bored. Or maybe they challenged you to explore your ideas and taught you how to find answers for your questions. Don't you wish every student had a teacher like that?

Those memories easily become the impetus to help someone else when we can. We remember how needed and welcome that extra nudge, encouragement, and assistance felt while working hard to achieve a goal.

So, what does this have to do with the Mensa Foundation? Actually ... everything. These are examples of how people have an impact well beyond their initial efforts. That person who received help from a friend's parent will have an

opportunity to return the favor in time. That student whose love of reading was fostered and supported – they will do the same with their students.

It's about paying it forward, how all of us help make the world a better place by making a difference. The longer I work with the Foundation, the more I realize and appreciate what can be accomplished when people care. Some people are there with aplomb and presence; others work quietly backstage where needed. Just as we plant shade trees for a future generation to enjoy, so do our efforts become part of effecting change in the future.

All of you who contribute in some way to the Foundation's programs and efforts are part of achieving our mission to benefit society by inspiring and empowering intellectually gifted people. You may contribute your time, your dollars, your talent, or some combination of these. Any and all of these are investments in the Foundation's work to ensure that we use our intelligence to benefit humanity.

Make an investment in intelligence. Those who are treasured donors and volunteers, thank you; you make our programs possible and give them impact. If you haven't yet donated or volunteered, don't you wish you had? Even a small gesture can ripple through to make a vast difference. You, too, can be part of investing in the future.

## COLLOQUIUM 2019 PRIVACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: MYSTERY OR MYTH?



**What kind of privacy should citizens expect and demand in the 21st century?** In this era of mass surveillance, internet-connected frying pans, and GPS-enabled computers in the pockets of most Americans, is the prospect of real privacy just a myth? Colloquium 2019 examined the inherent intertwine of privacy rights and information technology, including how governments, marketers, and political data firms collect, store, and use what the world's largest privately held software business calls the "ever-increasing volume, velocity, variety, variability and complexity of information." This annual one-day symposium sponsored by the Mensa Foundation every year takes a discrete, relevant topic to explore in detail. This year attendees heard presentations from:



**Alison Pepper**, Senior Vice President of Government Relations at the American Association of Advertising Agencies, where she works with regulators, legislators, and cross-industry stakeholders on issues of importance to the advertising community



**Danny O'Brien**, a longtime activist for online free speech and privacy and the International Director of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a leading digital civil liberties organization



**Orin Kerr**, one of the country's foremost scholars on cybercrime law and criminal procedure and an expert in internet surveillance law, the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, and the Fourth Amendment



**Wendy Davis**, policy editor at MediaPost covering online privacy and other issues affecting the advertising and media industries

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Learn more about Colloquium at [mensafoundation.org/colloquium](https://mensafoundation.org/colloquium)



# 2019 FOUNDATION AWARDS

## Lifetime Achievement Award

*Recognizing a lifetime of contributions to the field of intelligence and related subjects*



**Dean Keith Simonton's** interest in human intelligence arose, in part, from a youthful enthusiasm for the classical arts, sciences, and humanities. That keen interest in the nature and origins of genius in those domains led to a prolific research career. Dr. Simonton is the Distinguished Professor in Psychology at the University of California, Davis. With a master's and doctorate from Harvard, his preferred research approach is historiometric, using the tools of history, biography, and psychometrics to extrapolate principles about human behavior. His 300-plus books, chapters and articles explore genius, creativity, leadership, talent, and aesthetics. "My view of intelligence ... says that there are a certain set of cognitive capacities that enable an individual to adapt and thrive in any given environment they find themselves in, and those cognitive capacities include things like memory and retrieval, and problem solving and so forth," Dr. Simonton said. His numerous awards include the Award for Excellence in Research (1986, 2009) from the Mensa Foundation.

## Copper Black Award for Creative Achievement

*Recognizing an outstanding creative achievement by a member of American Mensa*

## and Intellectual Benefits to Society Award

*Recognizing the application of Mensans' intellectual abilities that result in tangible benefit to society by a member of American Mensa*



For only the second time, the accomplishments of a single nominee have earned that Mensan two Mensa Foundation awards. This dual recipient, **Mayank Kejriwal**, conducts research in the Center on Knowledge Graphs at the University of Southern California's Information Sciences Institute, with a focus on developing high-impact artificial intelligence technology. "I am a passionate advocate of using AI for social good and for ensuring that the fruits of technological development are distributed to all," said Dr. Kejriwal, who is being honored for his work combating human trafficking. The International Labor Organization estimates 4.8 million people are trapped in forced sexual exploitation globally. Dr. Kejriwal, who has degrees from the London School of Economics and Political Science, the University of Texas at Austin, and USC, developed an AI system – Domain-specific Insight Graphs (DIG) – that has been deployed to more than 200 U.S. law enforce-

ment agencies. DIG is essentially a search engine that finds and downloads sex advertisements to a secure computer, "reads" the ads, and helps law enforcement explore leads with high accuracy. The impact has been significant. In New York State, for example, evidence shows that prostitution arrests investigated for human trafficking activity have gone from less than 1 percent prior to implementation of DIG to more than 62 percent today, with the focus less on punishing victims and more on the endeavors of their "boyfriends." Dr. Kejriwal continues to use his AI expertise in other ways, such as resource mobilization during the Haiti earthquake and Hurricane Harvey as well as detecting fake news on the internet.

## Gifted Education Fellowship

*To assist outstanding educators in acquiring a graduate degree in gifted education or a closely related field from an accredited institution of higher education*



"How can we, as a nation, ensure that we are investing in and utilizing our greatest national capital, the minds of our children?" That question has driven **Lynne Henwood** in the seven years since she joined the Washington Township (N.J.) school district to identify and teach gifted students. Her journey now includes pursuing a master's of educational psychology at the University of Connecticut, learning that "will allow me to develop an even deeper understanding of gifted children and their needs," Henwood said. Her body of work, which was honored with the 2018 New Jersey Association of Gifted Children (NJAGC) Teacher of the Year award, includes joining the NJAGC board of trustees, testifying at the state board of education in support of gifted rights, and training in advocacy in Washington, D.C., where she met with members of Congress on behalf of gifted children.

## Distinguished Teacher Award

*Recognizing a teacher, professor or instructor at any educational level who has had an especially positive influence on the education or life of a Mensan*



Like music itself, music teacher **Marcia Blackstone Maull's** impact resonates across time and space. Her students have become luminary musicians and educational influencers in Africa, Europe, Asia, and America. Mensan Ingrid Bianca Byerly remembers the moment – her 15th birthday – when Maull arrived at the Music, Art and Ballet School in South Africa and cast her inspirational spell. "She championed unique assets and tended individual challenges. ... What stayed with me most,

however, was not just the detail of small phrases or large works. It was what she shared about the art of mastery, the discipline and focus that results in the euphoria of realizing one's aptitudes." Today, Maull still teaches and is the Head of Theory Program and board member at the Music Educators Association of New Jersey. And Maull's "ancestry of influence" is still connecting countless lives. "My 15th birthday may be a distant memory," Ingrid says, "but between 15 and 60 lie 45 years of inspiration that have affected my every day and every student that I teach now, too."

## International Intellectual Benefits to Society Award

*Recognizing the application of Mensans' intellectual abilities that result in tangible benefit to society by a member of Mensa*



**Guilherme Moisés Sampaio**, a member of Mensa Brazil and a professor of physics at the Federal University of São Carlos, is fascinated by magnetism, specifically magnetic nanoparticles and the phenomena known as superparamagnetism. His latest project is exploring the biomedical applications of magnetic nanoparticles such as magnetite, maghemite, and hematite; these applications include the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, the vectorization of drugs, and the contrast enhancement in magnetic resonance imaging. The work takes a comprehensive view on globalization, integrating the knowledge from the fields of physics, chemistry, biology, engineering, and medicine. Additionally, with lectures and theoretical classes, the project aims to stimulate scientific curiosity among Brazilian students in the final years of high school.

## Laura Joyner Award

*Recognizing outstanding work, theoretical or applied, in education, literacy or work with the gifted, or identifying threats to or preventing the loss of intelligence*



Veterans and athletes are often thought of as the main victims of concussions, but the **Barrow Neurological Institute** has created the first U.S. program to treat and study domestic violence survivors with traumatic brain injuries (TBI). Domestic violence is estimated to affect 10 million people annually, and because of the Barrow Institute's work, women who previously suffered in silence are becoming more aware of real issues resulting from their abuse. Based in Phoenix, the Barrow program founders identified a three-way link between homelessness, domestic violence, and TBI. Dr. Glynis Ziemann, who runs the clinic, told NPR last year, "About 81 percent of our patients had so many hits to the head, they lost count, which, you compare that to athletes, is astronomical." Working with shelters to identify victims of domestic violence, the program provides patients with a full spectrum of medical care with the goal of returning them to living healthy, productive lives. The care is free, whether patients have insurance or not, thanks to grants and private donations.

## Mensa Foundation Prize

*Recognizing applied and fundamental discoveries in areas such as brain-related research, creation of tools and mechanisms for advancing such research, or any significant research that leads to an improved understanding of human intelligence, including artificial intelligence*



Professor **Aron K. Barbey** has significantly advanced the neuroscience of brain connectivity with his innovative research applying functional magnetic resonance imaging to the mapping of brain lesions and measuring their effects on raw intelligence. Dr. Barbey is conducting his groundbreaking research on the connection between neural architecture and intelligence at the Center for Brain Plasticity, where he is the director, at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. "Dr. Barbey's work was unique in that he is a rare scientist studying actual human general intelligence and integrating its quantitative measure with a variety of biological experimental measures in a multidisciplinary model," said Dr. Susan Stine, a neuroscientist and member of the Foundation Prize Committee. Dr. Barbey becomes the second winner of the prestigious Mensa Foundation Prize, which is awarded biennially and includes a \$10,000 prize.

## Awards For Excellence in Research

*Recognize outstanding research on aspects of human intelligence and giftedness. This year's recipients are:*

### 2019 Senior Division

**Scott J. Peters**, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, "Equity and Excellence: Proactive Efforts in the Identification of Underrepresented Students for Gifted and Talented Services" (coauthor Kenneth G. Engerrand)

**Joseph Renzulli**, University of Connecticut, "Common Sense About the Under-Representation Issue: A School-Wide Approach to Increase Participation of Diverse Students in Programs that Develop Talents and Gifted Behaviors in Young People" (coauthor Laurel E. Brandon)

**Jonathan Wai**, University of Arkansas, "Sex Differences in Ability in the Right Tail of Cognitive Abilities: A 35-Year Examination" (coauthors Jaret Hodges and Matthew C. Makel)

### 2019 Junior Division

**Juliana Tay**, Purdue University, "Parental Perceptions of STEM Enrichment for Young Children" (coauthors Alissa Salazar and Hyeseong Lee)

**The Mensa Research Journal** highlights scholarly articles and recent research related to intelligence from a diverse selection of international authors. It is relevant and timely research on intelligence, specially curated for Mensans, and is available for \$27/year. The summer issue looks at memory, including the effects of memory on learning and cognition. While there may be no cure for memory aging, this issue will explore how to make the most of the memory you have. Other issues this past year explored exceptional geniuses and the work of "founder of neuropsychology" Brenda Milner. Subscribe to the MRJ at [mensafoundation.org/mrj](http://mensafoundation.org/mrj).



FOUNDATION  
CREATES GIFTED  
EDUCATION  
FELLOWSHIP

The Mensa Foundation is committed to creating a world where all gifted people have positive experiences in school and in their communities. An important step toward this goal is to help train future teacher-leaders in the field of gifted education, so they can promote the understanding that gifted education is special education and that gifted learners will not be fine on their own.

The new Gifted Education Fellowship, announced in July 2018 and first awarded this year, is intended to assist outstanding educators in acquiring a graduate degree in gifted education or a closely related field from an accredited institution of higher education. The Fellowship has a value of \$5,000 per year, renewable for one year.

Fellows may be granted the opportunity to conduct research with Mensa members as participants for projects that meet Mensa's Research Review Guidelines. Fellows are also eligible to receive a stipend and complimentary registration to attend Mensa's Annual Gathering or other official American Mensa events to present their research.

Fellows may also be invited to teach a section of classes for the Annual Gathering youth program or contribute lesson plans for the Mensa for Kids website.

Lynne Henwood is the Gifted Education Fellowship's first recipient. A New Jersey Association for Gifted Children Gifted Teacher of the Year, she is pursuing a Master's in educational psychology.



GIFTED YOUTH

The Foundation is committed to educational outreach and social stimulation for gifted youth, funding and supporting myriad programs.

See how at [mensafoundation.org/giftedyouth](https://mensafoundation.org/giftedyouth)

Scholarships

The longest-running and best-known effort by the Foundation to support human intelligence, the Mensa Foundation Scholarship Program bases its awards totally on essays written by applicants. In the 2018-19 program year, 8,765 students competed for 186 scholarship awards at the local, regional, national, and international level. With the help of hundreds of volunteer chairs and judges nationwide and the support of the National Office, the Foundation awarded \$138,200 in scholarships.

MensaForKids.org

The award-winning Mensa for Kids website ([MensaForKids.org](https://MensaForKids.org)) features a trove of resources for gifted youth, their families, and teachers. It's the place to learn about scholarships, the Mensa Honor Society, and the Excellence in Reading program, the year-round challenge to kids of all ages based on the National Endowment for the Humanities appreciation of classic literature. *Young Mensan magazine*, *Bright* newsletter, and games round out the activities for kids. The site also features resources for teachers, including lesson and activity plans.

Spark!

Activities for Young Mensans have been provided at each American Mensa Annual Gathering since 1997. Under the Mensa Foundation's sponsorship, the program has flourished. The multiple-day program track for youth is supervised by teachers and aides. The popular program features a summer-camp-type mix of cerebral and kinesthetic activities, providing variety, challenge, and the opportunity to develop peer relationships and build skills.



DEVELOPMENT  
UPDATE & OUTLOOK

Thank you for investing in intelligence!

Your increased donation of your time, treasure, and talent to the Mensa Foundation has doubled the amount contributed to the Foundation's general fund and has ballooned the number of supporters by more than 30 percent. This has assisted the Mensa Foundation to achieve heights of success never before seen. As a result, the Foundation is increasing its average scholarship amount, awarding a new Gifted Education Fellowship, increasing the awareness of the Foundation, and the best part ...

We are just getting started!

The Mensa Foundation empowers intelligence and emboldens the strengths and talents in us all. This excites change and inspires action for the betterment of society.

The Foundation will continue to do this by focusing its efforts toward the gifted education arena, increasing the resources and recognition it provides to individuals using their intelligence. The Foundation will also continue to look at ways it can increase its advocacy for the talented, and it will work with new partners to enhance existing programs and develop additional ones.

Lastly, the Mensa Foundation will identify even more ways to work alongside American Mensa to support its goals and plans.

An investment in the Mensa Foundation is an investment in intelligence, and with it you will assist the Foundation become the premier philanthropic organization for intelligence. Thank you again for your support!

John Thompson, Philanthropy Director  
[johnt@americanmensa.org](mailto:johnt@americanmensa.org)

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