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**LIBERTY SCIENCE CENTER'S 10th ANNUAL GENIUS GALA TO HONOR
DOUBLE AMPUTEE WHO IS "LEADER OF THE BIONIC AGE,"
A PIONEERING TRANSPLANT SURGEON WITH A HEART TRANSPLANT,
AND THE WOMAN CONSIDERED WORLD'S FOREMOST MAPPER OF BLACK HOLES**

***World's Youngest Chess Grandmaster Ever, 13-year-old Abhimanyu Mishra,
Is "Special Honoree" at May 2 Event; Will Play Speed Chess with 16-year-old Girl from Brooklyn
Aiming to Become First Female African-American Chess Master in History***

YouTube Superstar and Former LSC Volunteer Marques Brownlee to Receive Strides in STEM Award

Jersey City, NJ – April 28, 2022 – After Hugh Herr lost both legs below the knees in an accident as a teenager, he decided to devote his life to restoring mobility to the physically challenged. Today, he is considered the "leader of the Bionic Age" for inventing prosthetics that marry human physiology with electromechanics.

Dr. Robert Montgomery has also overcome almost unfathomable adversity and gone on to transform – indeed, save – so many lives. He is a heart transplantee who pioneered both the laparoscopic procedure for live kidney donation and the practice of "domino-paired kidney swaps." He made medical history last year when he performed a pig-to-human kidney transplant using a pig kidney that had been genetically modified so that it would not be immediately rejected.

And Priyamvada Natarajan is a trailblazer in her own right, overcoming racial and gender glass ceilings as a woman and a woman of color to become one of the world's foremost cosmologists and authorities on Black Holes.

On Monday, May 2, at 6 pm, Liberty Science Center will honor them for overcoming enormous challenges and rising to the pinnacle of their respective professions in science, technology, and medicine. **Paul Hoffman, the President and CEO of the Center** who created the Genius Awards in 2011, will bestow upon each the "Genius Award," the Center's highest honor, at the 10th Annual Genius Gala at the Center, 222 Jersey City Blvd., Jersey City, NJ.

Changing lives—and minds—are the *raison d'être* of the three Genius awardees, explained Hoffman. "They are making the impossible possible; they are making dreams reality; they are shrinking the universe for us to understand and appreciate while also expanding the worlds of individuals, communities, and nations through their inspiring achievements."

This year is the 10th Anniversary of the Genius Gala, an annual celebration of innovation, accomplishment, creativity, science, and technology. Over the years, the Genius Gala has raised nearly \$19 million for LSC's STEM education programs, helping to make world-class science learning accessible to students, teachers, and families, including those in high-needs communities. This year's honorees are living proof that—with the right support, education, and motivation—a genius can come from almost anywhere, and overcome almost anything.

The 2022 Genius Awardees are:

- **Hugh Herr**, who has been called the “Leader of the Bionic Age” by *TIME* magazine. A double-amputee – he lost both legs below the knees to frostbite after a teenage mountaineering accident – he has devoted his working life to restoring mobility to the physically challenged. As the Co-Director of the Center for Extreme Bionics at the MIT Media Lab, he is a pioneer in “biomechatronics,” technology that combines human physiology and electromechanical devices. His research group is building the next generation of smart, microprocessor-laden prosthetic knees, legs, and ankles.
- **Priyamvada Natarajan**, a professor of astronomy and physics at Yale University, and one of the foremost cosmic cartographers in the world. She specializes in mapping the unseen universe – everything from dark matter and dark energy to black holes. Her work, which utilizes the new ultrapowerful James Webb Space Telescope, will be presented in an immersive, visually stunning show in the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere during the event.
- **Robert Montgomery**, MD, DPhil, Chairman and Professor of Surgery at NYU Langone Health and Director of the NYU Langone Transplant Institute, is a practicing transplant surgeon who himself is the recipient of a heart transplant. He is a pioneer of both the laparoscopic procedure for live kidney donation and the practice of “domino-paired” kidney swaps—group donations that allow incompatible kidney transplant patients to receive the kidneys they need. He is responsible for over 1,000 living donor kidney transplants each year. In 2010, he set the Guinness World Record for the most kidney transplants performed in a single day! He made medical history again in September 2021 when he performed the first successful pig-to-human kidney transplant using a pig that had been genetically modified so that the kidney would not be immediately rejected. (The pig kidney came from a subsidiary of United Therapeutics, a biotech company founded by **Martine Rothblatt**, a 2019 Genius Award winner who will also be in attendance at this year’s event).

They will be recognized in Liberty Science Center’s permanent Genius Gallery display along with previous Genius Award recipients **Dr. William Conan Davis, Dr. Jennifer A. Lewis, Moshe Safdie, Dr. Katherine Johnson, Ray Kurzweil, Marc Raibert and SpotMini, Frank Gehry, Jack Horner, Ellen Langer, Kip Thorne, Sir Richard Branson, Garry Kasparov, Jane Goodall, Oliver Sacks, Temple Grandin, Dean Kamen, Sylvia Earle, Craig Venter, Cori Bargmann, Ernő Rubik, Jeff Bezos, Vint Cerf, Jill Tarter, Sara Seager, George Church, Vitalik Buterin, Laurie Santos, Chris Messina, Martine Rothblatt, and Drs. Sally and Bennett Shaywitz.**

At the gala, LSC will also pay tribute to **Abhimanyu Mishra** as a “Special Honoree.” Mishra made history on June 30, 2021, when he became the youngest chess Grandmaster ever at the age of 12 years, four months, and 25 days. A native of Englishtown, NJ, Mishra learned the rules of chess before he turned three and began playing in tournaments at five years old. In 2015, six-year-old Mishra faced the No. 2 player in the world, Fabiano Caruana, the visiting Grandmaster-In-Residence at Liberty Science Center, which “changed his life,” his father said.

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During the gala program, Mishra will play Speed Chess against **Jessica Hyatt**, a 16-year-old from Brooklyn who is aiming to become the first female African-American chess master in history. With an official chess rating of 2095, Hyatt, who attends Success Academy High School of the Liberal Arts in Manhattan, currently is only 105 rating points shy of the 2200 needed for the coveted master title.

Hoffman, a chess authority who has provided on-air commentary for World Chess Championships, and **Jonathan Corbblah**, the prominent “park chess hustler” who is currently one of the trivia experts, or Master Minds, on the Game Show Network's *Master Minds*, will offer commentary during the lightning-fast match.

LSC will also present its second Strides in STEM Award to YouTube science and technology superstar **Marques Brownlee**. A former teen volunteer at the Center, he is known professionally as **MKBHD**. As of April 2022, he has over 15 million subscribers and nearly 3 billion total video views on YouTube. Beyond that, he hosts the popular podcast *Waveform*. He has been called “the best technology reviewer on the planet right now” by Vic Gundotra, a former Senior Vice President of Google.

The event is attended by hundreds of industry leaders and philanthropists from the NY/NJ metropolitan area. The Corporate Chair is **Gary D. St. Hilaire**, President and CEO, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey.

The Innovation Chairs are **Jennifer A. Chalsty**, Director, Advisory Council, James Buchanan Brady Urological Institute, John Hopkins University; **Ralph Izzo**, President, Chairman and CEO, PSEG; and **Josh S. Weston**, Honorary Chairman, ADP.

The Co-Chairs of the Gala are **David Barry**, President and CEO, Urby; **Sheri B. Bronstein**, Chief Human Resources Officer, Bank of America; **The Cove JC**; **Alma DeMetropolis**, Managing Director; Market Manager, J.P. Morgan Private Bank; **Matthew D. Ellis**, EVP and CFO, Verizon Communications; **Richard M. Hodosh, MD**, Former Medical Director, Atlanta Brain and Spine Institute; **Kate and Steve Howe**, Retired Chairman, EY; **Bruce L. Levy**, President and CEO, BMR Energy; **Jeffrey M. Mandler**, Co-Owner and CEO, Evolve Med Spa; Co-Founder and Past CEO, CarePoint Health; **Laura Overdeck**, Founder, Bedtime Math; **Chirag Patel**, Co-CEO and President, Amneal Pharmaceuticals; **Al Reba**, VP, Worldwide Cardiovascular, Bristol Myers Squibb; **Carlos Rodriguez**, CEO, ADP; **Janet Truncale**, Vice Chair and Regional Managing Partner, Americas Financial Services Organization, EY; **Gregory Tusar**, Head of Institutional Product, Coinbase; and **Susan Keating and Norman Worthington III**, Chairman, Sangoma Technologies Corporation.

About Liberty Science Center

Liberty Science Center ([LSC.org](https://www.lsc.org)) is a 300,000-square-foot, not-for-profit learning center located in Liberty State Park on the Jersey City bank of the Hudson near the Statue of Liberty. Dedicated to inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers and bringing the power, promise, and pure fun of science and technology to learners of all ages, Liberty Science Center houses the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere, 12 museum exhibition halls, a live animal collection with 110 species, giant aquariums, a 3D theater, live simulcast surgeries, a tornado-force wind simulator, K-12 classrooms and labs, and teacher-development programs. Before COVID-19, more than 250,000 students visited the Science Center each year, and tens of thousands more participated in the Center’s off-site and online programs. Welcoming more than 750,000 visitors annually, LSC is the largest interactive science center in the NYC-NJ metropolitan area.