



2025 Golden Goose Award

SEPTEMBER 2025

1. Overview

Welcome to the AAAS PIO toolkit! A researcher from your institution will be honored on September 16 for helping advance science. We know that PIOs are extremely busy, so we wanted to provide a digital kit to make communications promotion easier for you. This document offers assets to incorporate into any communications.

The Golden Goose Award highlights research that can seem odd, obscure, or uncertain that has led to breakthroughs and positive societal impacts. Despite the benefits that could arise decades after initial federal funding investments are made, basic research funding could be negatively impacted in the FY25 and FY26 federal budgets. The Golden Goose Award will be celebrated on Tuesday, September 16, 2025.

This year's announcement will be moved up to early September ahead of the ceremony to support public affairs efforts around the September 30 federal budget deadline.

1.1 Goals

- Lead with impact data and stories to elevate the economic and societal benefits of federally funded fundamental discovery research
- Connect the economic and societal benefits to congressional states and districts
- Create a drumbeat of activities ahead of the September 30 deadline to create momentum and support for federally funded research

We look forward to working with you to highlight the annual [Golden Goose Award](#), a celebration of federally funded research that unexpectedly benefited society. The 2025 awardees are: **Barnett Rosenberg** (posthumous), **Loretta VanCamp**, and **Thomas Krigas** for Cisplatin.

This year, the event will take place at the Library of Congress on September 16 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. and will also be livestreamed via the Golden Goose YouTube page, [here](#). Please note the link will go live at 5:30 p.m. and broadcast the ceremony portion until 7 p.m.

2. Announcement Details

****IMPORTANT – EMBARGO INFORMATION****

Embargo activities commence on August 18 until September 3 at 10 a.m. ET. Please do not release information about the awardees before this time. The Office of Communications is pitching an early embargo lift time. We want to give ample time between the story and the institutional ones, keeping our word for the outlet to jump first on unveiling the awardees before 10 a.m. ET.

We encourage you to get the word out about the awardee(s) from your institution once the embargo lifts. We have provided background information and social media materials for you to adapt for the announcement (see sections 3-3.4).

You may also want to post a news release specific to your awardee(s) to EurekAlert! (www.eurekalert.org), a science news release distribution platform. You may post a news release to EurekAlert! at any time (noting the embargo), and it will be held in the embargoed section until the embargo lifts.

Reporters interested in attending the event, please direct them to media@aaas.org.

Examples of Institution Stories (2024)

Below are examples of how institutions have covered GGA stories and awardees in 2024.

- [From Brain to Machine: The Unexpected Journey of Neural Networks - Stanford University](#)
- [Heather Lynch Wins 2024 Golden Goose Award for Unconventional Research - Stony Brook University](#)
- [Woodpecker's comeback is professor's Golden Goose - Virginia Tech](#)

3. Suggested data, background & assets for your institution's story

- The Golden Goose Award highlights unexpected impacts where research sometimes seems odd, obscure, or has some uncertainty that leads to a breakthrough. Jim Cooper, a former Congressman, conceived the idea to elevate investing in curiosity-driven research in a wide range of fields without knowing where it would lead, yielding societal benefits.
- Since 2012, groups of researchers have been recognized each year for breakthroughs in the development of life-saving medicines and treatments, game-changing social and behavioral insights, and major technological advances related to national security, energy, the environment, communications, and public health.
- The Golden Goose Award has strong bipartisan support, and winners are honored every year at an award ceremony in Washington, D.C., where Members of Congress of both parties speak to the importance of the award and of federal funding of scientific research.
- Former U.S. Representative Jim Cooper (D-TN) inspired the creation of this award as a strong counterpoint to criticisms that fundamental discovery research was wasteful federal spending. Almost a decade and a half later, these awardees exemplify what is at stake as the U.S. administration's budget request [seeks to cut this type of research by about one third](#).

Congress has until September 30 to determine fiscal year 2026 funding levels for research and development amid disruptions to funding disbursements for the current fiscal year.

- “The Golden Goose awardees definitively demonstrate that federally funded American science continues to deliver for all of us. These discoveries show that American science is anything but stagnant. AAAS and the American people will continue to support federal investment in research that can make us healthier, safer, and stronger,” said **Sudip S. Parikh**, chief executive officer at AAAS and executive publisher of the *Science* family of journals.
- This year, U.S. Representative Jay Obernolte (R-CA) joins the bipartisan, bicameral "Gaggle of Supporters" on Capitol Hill.
- Link to the AAAS press release, [here](#). The link will go live once the embargo lifts.

3.1 Zoom In

Cisplatin Breakthrough Redefines Testicular Cancer Treatment

Awardees: Barnett Rosenberg, Loretta VanCamp, and Thomas Krigas

Research funded by: National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation

Barnett “Barney” Rosenberg wasn’t a cancer researcher — but he and his lab team helped unlock a breakthrough cancer treatment. In the 1960s, Rosenberg, working with lab technician Loretta VanCamp and a team of graduate students including Thomas Krigas, examined how electric fields affect cell division in *E. coli* bacteria. To their surprise, the bacteria stopped dividing and instead elongated into long, spaghetti-like shapes — a striking, unexplained phenomenon they investigated further. After a couple years of follow-up experiments, they discovered the true cause: platinum compounds released from the electrodes, not the electric field itself. This serendipitous finding led to the development of cisplatin, a platinum-based chemotherapy drug approved in 1978. At the time, the idea of using a metal-containing compound in medicine was unconventional and met with skepticism due to concerns over toxicity to humans. After harmful side effects were mitigated, cisplatin was approved and delivered unprecedented results — most notably, increasing the survival rate for testicular cancer from around 10% to over 90%. Its success transformed cancer treatment and has saved countless lives.

Recommended sources for reporters:

- Tina Rosenberg Varenik, awardee's daughter and journalist (yes to press)
- Derek Raghavan, Senior Oncologist, Veterans Administration Health Care Center, Charlotte; Emeritus Professor, Wake Forest School of Medicine, Founding President Emeritus, Levine Cancer Institute, Charlotte. Former Chair & Director of the Cleveland Clinic Taussig Cancer Institute and former member of the FDA Oncology Drug Advisory Committee (yes to press)

Recommended sources for reporters:

- Zehra Nizami, researcher in Joe's lab (yes to press)

3.2 Multimedia

You may access the multimedia [in this Dropbox link](#). Please credit the short videos to "522 Productions," which will be added to Dropbox a few days before the announcement. The photos have the credit listed in the file name, and the other photos (which are just labelled with a name) correspond to the awardee who submitted them, which you can credit directly to that awardee.

3.3 Institution social media

So that we can help share your stories across our channels – please follow us on social media and tag us in anything relevant so that we can retweet/share your posts:

- X: [@aaas](#)
- Facebook: [AAAS.Science](#)
- LinkedIn: [aaasorg](#)
- Instagram: [aaasorg](#)
- Bluesky: [@aaas.org](#)

Here are some suggested social media posts for you to re-purpose or use as is.

****IMPORTANT – EMBARGO INFORMATION****

The news is under embargo **until September 3 at 10 a.m. ET**. Please do not release information about the awardees before this time.

Twitter (X)/Bluesky

- Congratulations to [awardee [names or handles](#)] for receiving a @GoldGooseAward! Scientists took research risks thanks to federal agencies' support to explore basic research that ultimately benefited society. Full story here: [\[link to article from institution or from AAAS\]](#)
- Scientists, including our own [awardee [names or handles](#)], were recognized for their innovative work on [\[add finding/implications\]](#).
- We are thrilled to learn that [awardee(s) from your institution] received a @GoldGooseAward! Learn more about [his/her/their] project here: [\[link to article from institution or from AAAS\]](#)

Facebook/LinkedIn:

For [his/her/their] contributions in the field of [\[add field name\]](#), [awardee [names](#)] [have/has] been selected for the 2025 Golden Goose Award—a recognition celebrating federally funded scientific research that's returned serious benefits to society. This award comes with bipartisan support, as Members of Congress elevate the importance of federal funding for basic research. Congratulations to the awardees! [\[link to article from institution or from AAAS\]](#)

3.4 Awardee's social media

Twitter (X)/Bluesky

- I am honored to be celebrated alongside [name of other awardees]! What was once considered maybe wonky research has led to unexpected discoveries. Thank you, @GoldGooseAward and federal agencies, for recognizing years of effort. [[link to article from institution or from AAAS](#)]
- I am thrilled to join a unique group of researchers who have received the prestigious @GoldGooseAward—a result of federal funding giving my research a chance and that research unexpectedly benefitting society. [[link to article from institution or from AAAS](#)]

Facebook/LinkedIn

Sometimes all it takes is perseverance and innovative thinking coupled with federal funding to take research risks or pursue wonky research to fuel progress. After years of work, it is an honor to receive the 2025 Golden Goose Award—a recognition celebrating silly-sounding science that returned serious benefits to society. I am eternally grateful to the mechanisms that are in place for the scientific community to explore the unknown through federally funded research. [[link to article from institution or from AAAS](#)]