

Dr. Jorge Colón will receive highest honor by the Puerto Rico Chemists Association ^[1]

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Rebecca Soler, President of the Puerto Rico Chemists Association (Colegio de Químicos de Puerto Rico), has announced that Professor Jorge L. Colón has been named the recipient of the highest honor conferred by the Colegio, the Dr. Osvaldo Ramírez Torres Award 2014-2015. The award is given to chemists that have stood out for their continuous and significant contributions to Science, the community, and the Colegio.

Among previous awardees of the Dr. Osvaldo Ramírez Torres award (previously the Colegio de Químicos Award) that are current members of our Department are Dr. Waldemar Adam (1977 awardee), Dr. Pío Rechani (1987 awardee), Dr. J. Roberto Ramírez (1989 awardee), and Dr.

José A. Prieto (2003 awardee).

The award will be presented at the Colegio's 74th Conference and Exhibition PRChem 2015 on August 1, 2015, at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Isla Verde, Puerto Rico.

Professor Colón received his B.S. degree from our Department and his Ph.D. degree from Texas A&M University. After postdoctoral positions at Texas A&M University and the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) he joined our Department in 1992, where he is currently a full professor and Coordinator of the Chemistry Graduate Program. His research interests are in the area of layered inorganic nanomaterials with applications in artificial photosynthesis, biosensors, and drug delivery. He currently has collaborations for several of these projects with researchers at the University of Cincinnati, Texas A&M University, University of Nantes (France), and the University of Puerto Rico - Río Piedras, Mayagüez, and Medical Sciences campuses.

Professor Colón has won the National Science Foundation (NSF) Postdoctoral Fellowship (1990-92), the NSF Young Investigator Award (1993), and both the Leonardo Igaravidez Award (2008) and the Education Award (2009) of the American Chemical Society (ACS)-Puerto Rico Section.

Professor Colón served as President of the Caribbean Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) (2007-2009), the ACS-Puerto Rico Section (1997, and as treasurer in 1995 and 2004-present), and the Puerto Rican Association of University Professors (1999 and Vice-President of the Río Piedras Campus Chapter from 2010-2012). He currently heads the Caribbean Brigade of the Solar Army, the outreach program of the NSF sponsored Center for Chemical Innovation-Solar Fuels in collaboration with Caltech. The Caribbean Brigade has given workshops on solar energy to hundreds of teachers and thousands of students in Puerto Rico.

Professor Colón joined the Colegio de Químicos in 1997 and has served twice in its Board of Directors representing Academic Region I. He has been a member of the Colegio's Continuing Education Program Committee, the Students' Award Committee, the Science and Technology Committee, and the IUPAC Committee. In addition, he has been active giving continuing education courses for its members. He also served as President of the Scientific Committee of the IUPAC World Chemistry Congress held in San Juan in 2011 organized by the Colegio.

Among Professor Colón's contributions to the community has been his environmental work as advisor to community-based organizations in Vieques, Puerto Rico. Professor Colón was a member of the *Todo Puerto Rico con Vieques* Coordinating Committee, the *Professional and Technical Support Group for the Sustainable Development of Vieques* (GATP), which published the book *Guidelines for the Sustainable Development of Vieques* (2002), and the *Vieques Working Group* of the Puerto Rican Athenaeum, which published in 2003 the book *Vieques ante el 2003*. In 2015 Professor Colón helped organized a forum on decontamination of Vieques held at the Río Piedras Campus which resulted in the establishment of the *Independent Scientific Coalition on Vieques*. He was arrested and held in prison for doing civil disobedience against the US Navy bombing of Vieques in 2000. Dr. Colón is a member of the *UNESCO Chair on Peace Education* of the Río Piedras Campus of the University of Puerto Rico.

Professor Colón is coauthor of the report *Science for Haiti: A Report on Advancing Haitian Science and Science Education Capacity*, published by the AAAS in 2011. In February 2015, on the fifth anniversary of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, he organized a symposium on this topic at the AAAS Annual Conference held in San José, California. Professor Colón is a member of the *Comité de Solidaridad con el Pueblo de Haití*.

Professor Colón is co-author (and co-editor) of the book *Tailored Organic-Inorganic Materials* published in May 2015 by John Wiley & Sons, as well as co-author of the book *El proyecto de explotación minera en Puerto Rico 1962-1968: Nacimiento de la conciencia ambiental moderna* (Ediciones Huracán, 2014). Professor Colón is also a member of *Ciencia Puerto Rico* (cienciapr.org).

We congratulate Professor Colón on winning this prestigious award.

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