

ASHG 2017 Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL
The ASHG/FASEB Mentored Travel Awards Program-Mentors



Candace Middlebrooks, PhD, is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the National Human Genome Research Institute in the section of Joan Bailey-Wilson, PhD. She works in the field of Computational and Statistical Human Genetics and performs studies to identify susceptibility genes for lung cancer in highly aggregated families. Dr. Middlebrooks received her BS degree in Biotechnology from the Rochester Institute of Technology and a Master's degree from the University at Buffalo. She received her PhD in Genetics and Molecular Biology at Emory University, where she used methods from the field of genetic epidemiology to better understand aberrant recombination events in Trisomy 21. During her first postdoctoral fellowship in a laboratory at the National Cancer Institute, she used her knowledge of genetic epidemiology and cancer to translate the findings of a urinary bladder cancer genome-wide association study into biological mechanisms. Dr. Middlebrooks' overarching career goal is to contribute to the clinical management of human genetic diseases by translating genetic research into novel biological mechanisms and personalized treatment options. She has special interest in genetic diseases that occur at disproportionate rates in underprivileged groups. She has served as a mentor in various programs, such as the NIH Summer internship program. ***Dr. Middlebrooks' advice to trainees is to find a mentor for all stages of your training (undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral). This person may not necessarily be your research mentor, but should be someone who has achieved the goals you wish to achieve and has a track record in mentoring minorities.***



Mesaki Kenneth Ndugga-Kabuye, MD, is currently a resident physician in the Medical Genetics and Genomics residency program at the University of Washington. Dr. Ndugga-Kabuye grew up in Southern California. He received his undergraduate degree in Microbiology, Immunology and Molecular Genetics at the University of California, Los Angeles. He went to medical school at the Ross University School of Medicine and then completed the SUNY Stony Brook Medicine/Mather Hospital Transitional Year Residency Program. Dr. Ndugga-Kabuye's current research interests include risk stratification in von Hippel-Lindau disease, and gene discovery and functional studies in a cohort of patients with axonal forms of Charcot-Marie-Tooth with an as-yet unidentified genetic etiology. His broad interests are in the vibrant translational work being done in the genetics and genomics space. He is a member of the University of Washington Network of Underrepresented Residents and Fellows and of the Student National Medical Association. He is also interested in the role of public-private partnerships in maximizing the benefits of the genetics revolution for all communities. ***Dr. Ndugga-Kabuye advises trainees to dream big and surround themselves with peers and mentors with an insatiable and contagious scientific curiosity.***



Teresa Ramirez, PhD, is currently the National Human Genome Research Institute/American Society of Human Genetics (NHGRI/ASHG) Genetics & Education fellow. Dr. Ramirez was a postdoctoral research fellow at the National Institutes of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She is a first-generation Mexican-American and the first in her family to have graduated from college and obtained a doctoral degree. She received her BS degree in General Biology from California State University, Dominguez Hills, in 2004, and participated in a post-baccalaureate program at the National Cancer Institute. Dr. Ramirez has been a member of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/as and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) for 17 years. She obtained her doctorate degree in Molecular Pharmacology and Physiology from Brown University in 2014 and was the founder and first president of the Brown University SACNAS Chapter (established in 2012). Her postdoctoral research focused on how aging and chronic alcohol exposure played a role in causing liver injury. Dr. Ramirez is currently the president of the NIH SACNAS Chapter. She is passionate about sharing her love for science and mentoring students. Dr. Ramirez firmly believes in the importance of mentorship and how it can create a positive impact in the lives of others as it did on hers. ***Dr. Ramirez therefore advises students to stay focused and continue following their dreams by working hard, staying positive, and always asking questions.***



Julie Nadel, PhD, is currently the Program Manager for the Next Scholars Program, a virtual mentoring program that connects undergraduate women in STEM majors at U.S. colleges and universities with female STEM professionals, at the New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS). Prior to that, she was the 2015/16 National Human Genome Research Institute/American Society of Human Genetics (NHGRI/ASHG) Genetics & Education fellow. Dr. Nadel received bachelor's degrees in life sciences and neuropsychology from The Pennsylvania State University, and her PhD in genetics from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Her thesis work investigated a non-canonical nucleic acid structure, RNA:DNA hybrids, and their role in chromatin composition and gene expression regulation. The paper based on her thesis work received

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Epigenetics and Chromatin's Best Paper Award for 2015. Dr. Nadel has participated in many STEM mentoring and education programs, including the NYAS After School STEM Mentoring Program, which inspired her to begin a similar program at the Bronx Renaissance Center. Now managing a mentoring program full-time, Dr. Nadel is firmly committed to the importance of mentoring in furthering the careers of trainees in biomedical sciences, and loves that an official part of her job is advocating for Women in STEM. ***Dr. Nadel's best advice for students is to never feel embarrassed introducing yourself to people you want to know or asking questions. Networking goes both ways, and you never know when that person will find themselves feeling lucky to know you.***



Tiffany Oliver, PhD, is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at Spelman College. Prior to coming to Spelman, she completed both her PhD and postdoctoral studies in the Department of Human Genetics at Emory University. Dr. Oliver received her B.S. in Biology degree from Tennessee State University in 2003. As a graduate student, her research involved identifying genetic, genomic, and environmental risk factors for the nondisjunction of chromosome 21, which causes Down syndrome. Research and mentoring are central to her purpose in life. Her lab at Spelman consists solely of undergraduates, many of whom have graduated and gone on to do great things, including receiving pre-doctoral fellowships, entering graduate school, and serving in STEM disciplines in a variety of other capacities. To say that she is very proud of them is an understatement. Her research students know that they are mentees for life and that she will continue to be there for them beyond graduation, as they embark upon their biomedical journey. ***Dr. Oliver's advice to her trainees is to know who you are, be comfortable with him/her, and move forward with confidence in your knowledge and abilities.***



Sirisak Chanprasert, MD, is an attending adult and metabolic geneticist at Division of Medical Genetics, Department of Medicine, University of Washington School of Medicine (UW Medicine). Dr. Chanprasert received his medical degree from Mahidol University in Bangkok. He did internal medicine residency training at Bassett Medical Center in Cooperstown, NY, from 2009-2012. Afterward, he completed his medical genetics residency and medical biochemical genetics fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine from 2012-2015. During his medical genetics training, Dr. Chanprasert participated in clinical research for mitochondrial diseases – specifically, finding the etiology of stroke-like episodes of mitochondrial encephalomyopathy lactic acidosis and stroke-like episodes (MELAS) syndrome. He also worked in several drug company-sponsored clinical trials for children with mitochondrial diseases. From 2015-2016, Dr. Chanprasert worked as a research fellow at the Seattle Children's Research Institute's Center of Developmental Therapeutics, which focuses on research in mitochondrial medicine. After completing training, he accepted the assistant professor position in Division of Medical Genetics at UW Medicine. He is now a full time clinician at an adult genetic clinic. In recent years, Dr. Chanprasert has been a mentor for undergraduate, medical, and post-graduate students who are interested in genetic and genomic science, especially pertaining to care of patients with genetic conditions. ***Dr. Chanprasert's advice to trainees is to make new connections and make the most of the ASHG meeting to help develop their scientific career plans.***



Janina M. Jeff, PhD, MS, is a human geneticist, educator, and minority science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) activist. She received her PhD in Human Genetics and a Masters in Applied Statistics from Vanderbilt University and her BS in Biology from Spelman College. Dr. Jeff finished her postdoctoral training at Mount Sinai Hospital in population genetics and pharmacogenetics, and now works at Illumina as a Global Bioinformatician for genotyping arrays. She is an expert in statistical design and interpretation of large-scale genomic data. Her research career has been largely focused on the discovery of genetic loci that impact admixed populations, Hispanics and African Americans, for complex common diseases. Dr. Jeff has taught a breadth of undergraduate and graduate courses in biology, genetics, and statistics. She has also taught K-12 STEM courses, and during her graduate career, served as the first grade scientist for the Scientists in the Classroom Partnership with Nashville Public Schools and Vanderbilt University. Dr. Jeff is a product of the New Orleans Public Education School System and has been passionate about serving her community since high school. As a junior at McDonough #35 High School, Dr. Jeff and her peers started a non-profit called Initiating a Circle of Education. Dr. Jeff's commitment to the community continues today, as she is dedicated to educating her community about STEM careers to ultimately change the face of STEM for generations to come. ***Dr. Jeff's advice to trainees is to network!***

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Elizabeth Tuck, MS, is a Genomics Education Specialist at the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) where she works on K-16 genomics education and community engagement. She recently coordinated a national meeting of participants from academia, industry, government, and non-profit to address the need for genomic literacy in the public, K-16 students, and healthcare professionals, and she co-chaired the K-16 Working Group. At NHGRI she mentors a high school intern and post-baccalaureate fellow. Previously, she was a Genetics and Education Fellow with ASHG and NHGRI, where she worked on curricular resources, teacher professional development, and training scientists in public engagement at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH). Before her fellowship, Ms. Tuck taught high school biology at the Wellington School in Columbus, Ohio and informal STEM education at the St. Louis Science Center in St. Louis, Missouri where she developed inquiry-based curricula incorporating modern research to engage students in STEM. She also mentored students pursuing independent research projects, coordinated scientist volunteers, and developed community events. Ms. Tuck earned her B.A. in biology and psychology at Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana, and her M.A. in molecular cell biology at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Her graduate research focused on molecular mechanisms of neurological and neuromuscular disorders, such as Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease (CMT) and limb-girdle muscular dystrophy (LGMD).
Advice: Learn something from everyone you meet. Expertise can mean a lot of different things - they have unique experiences and their perspective can open you up to new ways of thinking.