

the Catalyst



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ACS Philadelphia Section



ULLYOT LECTURE and AWARD

Sir David W.C. MacMillan
Wednesday, November 19, 2025 | 6 PM-8 PM EST
Science History Institute

HIGHLIGHTS

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A D V A N C E N O T I C E

January Meeting

TBD

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Comments From the Chair



Dear Philadelphia ACS Members,

November arrives with crisp air and a renewed sense of purpose—a time to celebrate our recent achievements, honor excellence, and gear up for the close of a remarkable year. Our Section continues to shine as a hub of innovation, mentorship, and community engagement.

October was a banner month, brimming with events that empowered the next generation and advanced our shared mission. A standout was the PAGES™ (Philadelphia Area Girls Exploring Science) Fall Mini-Conference, recently rebranded to emphasize discovery and curiosity in STEM. Held on Saturday, October 4, 2025, at Villanova University under the theme “PAGES™ 2025: Celebrating Chemistry, Curiosity, and Community,” this inspiring outreach initiative engaged sixth-grade girls in hands-on chemistry experiments that sparked excitement and creativity. The event was a resounding success, filled with high-energy labs and empowering interactions that left participants buzzing with inspiration for future years. Hosted by the Philly ACS Women’s Chemists Committee, this year’s conference was led by co-chairs [Brisa Hurlocker](#) and [Jessica Myers](#), with [Gwenny Go](#) serving as PAGES™ co-director. Their vision brought together an incredible team, including [Hannah Parsons](#) for planning and day-of coordination, [Ayesha Tayal](#) for social media and on-site support, [Evan Schwarzmunn](#) for event assistance, and [Matthew Budiman](#) for photography. We also extend deep gratitude to our keynote speaker, [Corin \(Cori\) Dorfmeier](#), seventeen dedicated experiment leaders, and sponsors including Merck, AlphaProTech, Ansell, Thermo Fisher Scientific in addition to our Section. Please check out more photos and information at the [LinkedIn repost](#).



On the same day, October 4, we hosted a fun and informative chemistry networking event for [undergraduate students at the Science History Museum](#), where attendees met chemists, gained

resume tips, explored career paths, and connected with peers—furthering our commitment to nurturing emerging talent. Big thank you to [Prof. James Murray, Jr.](#) and [Prof. Michael Castaldi](#) for your dedication on coaching undergraduates regarding their career and professional developments.

The pinnacle of the month was the [2025 Philadelphia Section Award Ceremony](#) honoring [Dr. Spiridoula Matsika](#), Professor of Chemistry at Temple University. Dr. Matsika has transformed our understanding of molecular photochemistry through her pioneering work on conical intersections and DNA photoprotection, revealing how nature safely dissipates energy to prevent damage. With over 150 publications, an NSF CAREER Award, and leadership of Temple's NIH MARC program for underrepresented students, she exemplifies scientific excellence and mentorship. Her seminar, "Exploring Excited States and Inspiring Students," reflected her journey as a theoretical chemist and her passion for education, drawing a full house and a mini reunion of people from her group over the years. The reception and seminar were free and open to the public. A heartfelt thank you to Chair-Elect Andrew Devaney, Past Chair Matt Irwin, and Prof. Ann Valentine at Temple University for orchestrating this memorable evening.

Also in October, the Career Consulting Network (CCN) delivered a forward-looking virtual session: "[A Consultant's Guide to Generative AI for Chemistry](#)" by Dr. Fan Li. This timely presentation explored how AI tools are transforming R&D workflows and sparked lively discussion. Dr. Qiong Yuan's webinar on "[Learning from Nature and Collective Wisdom for a Brighter Future](#)" further showcased our leadership in the Natural Polymers Convergent Chemists Community (CCC), highlighting sustainable materials innovation and industry applications.

Mark your calendars for **November 19**: Our Section is proud to co-sponsor the 2025 Ulliyot Public Affairs Lecture and Award **at the Science History Institute**, honoring Nobel laureate Sir David W.C. MacMillan (Princeton University). Sir David—co-recipient of the 2021 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for asymmetric organocatalysis and knighted in 2022—will deliver the Liberty Bowl presentation "The Path to Invention and Discovery in Catalysis" (6:00–7:00 PM), followed by a reception (7:00–8:00 PM). This in-person event celebrates the profound societal impact of catalysis and offers a rare glimpse into the life of a Nobel winner. Free, but register soon at science-history.org/ullyot. Co-sponsored by ACS Philadelphia and Delaware Sections, UPenn Chemistry, and others.

December will feature our annual holiday social and volunteer recognition. Stay tuned for details! As we reflect on a year of growth, impact, and connection, let's carry this momentum into 2026—continuing to innovate, mentor, and celebrate the chemistry that binds us.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely, Wei Gao
Chair, Philadelphia Local Section
American Chemical Society

NEWS ATOMS—Alan Warren

DEATHS

Patrick E. McGovern, international researcher, adjunct professor and “archaeochemist,” August 24, 2025 at 80. He was scientific director of the Biomolecular Archaeology Laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. He served as adjunct professor of anthropology at Penn and was a prolific author. He wrote hundreds of articles for the journal *Nature*, and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, and several books.

He joined the museum in 1977 and semiretired in 2020. McGovern directed research on ancient cuisine, fermented beverages, and health. He was a student of the history of wine, beer, ale, and mead and served as a consultant to brewers.

OBITUARY: MARGARET A. MATTHEWS, ACSF, 1947-2025—Alan Warren



Longtime member of the American Chemical Society and the Philadelphia Section, Marge Matthews died October 8, 2025 at age 78. She joined ACS in 1972 and was active in the Local Section as well as National ACS.

Marge obtained a BS in chemistry from Chestnut Hill College and an MS in chemistry from St. Joseph's University. She joined the chemical information department of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI – later Thomson Scientific and then Clarivate). At ISI/Thomson she was a Software Engineer and served as Manager of the chemical documentation department, then as Senior Program Analyst, and Senior Chemical Information Specialist. She was involved with editing the structure and indexing of new organic compounds from leading organic chemistry journals. Marge was forced to retire in 2014 when Thomson moved its operations to India. In the meantime, she was also a part-time Senior Quality Assurance Specialist with Netbridge Technologies, an online information service for small business owners.

She joined the Publications Committee (now Communications Committee) of the Philadelphia Section ACS in 1982 where she began as a Proof Editor and then served as Editor-in-Chief of *the Catalyst* from 2003 to 2005. Marge chaired the Communications Committee from 2008 to 2017. She continued proofreading the journal until she became ill earlier this year. Marge was responsible for informing Philadelphia Section members each month of when the latest issue of *The Catalyst* was released and posted on the Section's website.

Marge served the Philadelphia Section as councilor and alternate councilor and as a member of the board of directors. For National ACS she was assistant to the Managing Editor of the ACS journal *Organic Letters* for two years and served on the Divisional Activities Committee where

she co-chaired the Governance and Reporting Subcommittee. Marge was also active in the Division of Chemical Information (CINF) as Proof-Editor, then Associate Editor, and finally Editor of the *Chemical Information Bulletin* (1977-1994). She then became Editor of the *CINF Newsletter* until 1997. She also served the division as treasurer and a member of its awards committee. CINF presented Marge with its Meritorious Service Award in 2005.

Marge Matthews received a Philadelphia Section service award in 2003 and a Salute to Excellence from the Section in 2018. In 2022 she was named an American Chemical Society Fellow.

OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER

Younger Chemists Committee Program and Event Planning Volunteers: The Younger Chemists Committee (YCC) is a committee of the Philadelphia Local Section focusing on the needs of undergraduate, graduate, post doc, and early career chemists under 35 years old. The committee is looking for volunteers to help with program planning this year! This is an excellent opportunity for students and early career chemists to assume leadership roles and network with likeminded scientists within the ACS community. The estimated time commitment would be less than 1 hour per week.

All interested individuals can reach out to Andres Vasquez-Lopez at:
andres.vazquez.lopez.acs@gmail.com



The Committee on Minority Affairs is seeking members. If you would like to join, please contact cma.philaacs@gmail.com to learn more.

ACS CAREER CONSULTANTS

Would you like to speak to a local ACS Career Consultant? The Philadelphia Section career consultants can provide one-on-one career advice, resume reviews, or mock interviews. Please send an email request to acsphillycareerservices@gmail.com to set up an appointment.

Ulliot Lecture and Award: Sir David W. C. MacMillan
Wednesday, November 19, 2025 | 6 PM-8 PM EST
Science History Institute
315 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia PA 19106

The 2025 Ulliot Public Affairs Lecture and Award will feature Nobel laureate Sir David W. C. MacMillan. A Q&A session and the presentation of the Liberty Bowl will follow MacMillan's lecture.

The Path to Invention and Discovery in Catalysis

This lecture will first discuss the advent and development of asymmetric organocatalysis in the MacMillan Laboratory. It will also include the exploration of the concepts of chemical reactivity, catalysis, and the asymmetry of organic molecules, as well as the impact of organocatalysis on modern synthetic chemistry and the real-world applications of this technology. We will then look to the future and consider how organocatalysis may continue to influence scientific research and society. The second part of the talk will be a lighthearted discussion of the life-changing experience of becoming a Nobel Prize winner, and the ways in which this experience shapes your perspective of science and society.

About Sir David W. C. MacMillan



The Liberty Bowl is presented annually to the Ulliot lecturer. Science History Institute.

Sir David W. C. MacMillan was born in Bellshill, Scotland, and received his undergraduate degree in chemistry at the University of Glasgow, where he worked with Ernie Colvin. In 1990 he began his doctoral studies under the direction of Larry Overman at the University of California, Irvine, before undertaking a postdoctoral position with Dave Evans at Harvard University in 1996. He began his independent career at the University of California, Berkeley, in July of 1998 before moving to Caltech in 2000 as the Earle C. Anthony Chair of Organic Chemistry. In 2006 MacMillan joined Princeton University as the A. Barton Hepburn Professor of Chemistry. He served as Department Chair from 2010 to 2015 and is currently the James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor of Chemistry and a Ludwig Distinguished Scholar.

MacMillan shared the 2021 Nobel Prize in Chemistry with Benjamin List “for the development of asymmetric organocatalysis.” He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in July 2022. His research interests encompass a wide range of organic chemistry, including the development of new areas in organocatalysis and photoredox catalysis.

About the Ulliot Public Affairs Lecture

The [Ulliot Public Affairs Lecture](#) emphasizes the positive role that the chemical and molecular sciences play in our lives. It’s presented in partnership with the Philadelphia and Delaware Sections of the American Chemical Society, the Department of Chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, the Department of History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania, and the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of the Sciences.

Reservations must be made in advance. To register for the lecture, go to www.sciencehistory.org/visit/events/ullyot-lecture-and-award-sir-david-w-c-macmillan/

What is the best-kept secret of the Delaware Valley?

That chemists can pursue graduate-level chemistry courses or obtain a Master of Science in Chemistry and Molecular Technology at Rutgers University–Camden, just across the Ben Franklin Bridge! The campus offers secure on-site parking and is easily accessible via the PATCO High-Speed Line.

The **M.S. in Chemistry and Molecular Technology** program at Rutgers–Camden is designed for working professionals and recent graduates seeking to deepen their knowledge of modern chemistry and its technological applications. The department’s small size and flexible structure foster close mentorship and hands-on experience in state-of-the-art research laboratories. Students gain practical and theoretical skills that enhance their careers in **industry, government, or education**. The 30-credit program accommodates **full-time or part-time** students, with **evening courses** designed for working scientists. Two advanced degree tracks are available: one emphasizing **research with a faculty mentor** (18 lecture credits required) and another focusing primarily on **coursework** (27 lecture credits required), both culminating in a written and oral presentation.

Course offerings for Spring 2026 include:

Advanced Environmental Chemistry, Fundamentals of Pharmacology and Pharmacokinetics, Statistical Methods in Chemistry, Biochemistry II, and Protein Structure and Function

For further information, contact: Dr. David Salas-de la Cruz: 856-225-6142; david.salas@camden.rutgers.edu, <https://chemistry.camden.rutgers.edu/>. Prospective graduate students may obtain information at: <https://graduateschool.camden.rutgers.edu/chemistry/>

CHEMICAL CONSULTANTS NETWORK MEETING NOVEMBER 12, 2025

RENEWABLE ENERGY ON THE ELECTRIC GRID IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

David Walter, Director of Marine Operations for University of Delaware

DATE & TIME: Wednesday November 12, 2025, 6:30 PM

[Click here to register](#) (available in early November)

Location: Online via Zoom! (Registration required, see below)

Abstract: This presentation will provide an overview of the electric grid and the various forms of electrical generation that power it. Using traditional forms of generation, e.g., natural gas and coal, as a baseline, we will compare the costs and operational limitations of installing alternative generation technologies, such as solar, wind, geothermal, and nuclear utilizing the concept of levelized cost of electricity (LCOE). The effects of large-scale storage technologies, data centers, and public policy on the needs of the grid will also be discussed.

Biography: David Walter is currently the Director of Marine Operations for University of Delaware. Prior to this role, he worked at the Department of Energy as the sector lead for renewables at the Loan Programs Office and a technology manager for grid integration research in the Solar Energy Technologies Office. David earned a B.S. in Ocean Engineering from the United States Naval Academy and is a licensed professional engineer (PE) and project management professional (PMP).

[Click here to register to attend the event](#). This session is **FREE**.

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CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Being a part of one of our teams can help you develop organizational and meeting skills as well as help you to network with people from the largest area companies. Public Relations, such as sending out meeting notices and press releases, can help you to develop a network and help you get noticed!

All committees are looking for new members and several are looking for "take charge" chairs. Some, like the Teller's Committee, involve minimal work—one night per year and pizza provided. Others, like positions on Communications or Social Committees, involve one or two hours per month.

Committee details can be found at:

www.membership.acs.org/p/philadelphia

or by calling the Philadelphia Section Office (215) 382-1589.

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