

VAST PDI 2022 Speakers

Meet the four exciting general session speakers for the upcoming, in person, Professional Development Institute. We are so pleased to introduce them. Plan to attend and to be inspired by them.



Dr. Jeanette Davis AKA Dr. Ocean

<https://www.drjeannedavis.com>

General Session II, Thursday, 6:00 pm

Science is Everywhere, Science is for Everyone: The Art of Storytelling

Dr. Jeanette Davis also known as Dr. Ocean is a Marine Microbiologist and author of best-selling children's books *Science is Everywhere*, *Science is for Everyone* and *Jada's Journey Under the Sea* created to explore and diversify science. Dr. Ocean research ranges from fisheries management to bacterial symbiosis to find new medicines from the ocean. She is cited in *Science* for helping to discover a marine microbe that fights cancer. Dr. Ocean attributes her success to the strong foundation that she received at Hampton University. Dr. Ocean continues to be an ocean advocate and travels around the world to help manage ocean resources.



Dr. Raquel Fleskes

<https://www.raquelfleskes.com/>

General Session II, Friday, 10:30 am

The Science of Making Science Accessible: DNA and Community Building

Raquel Fleskes is an anthropological geneticist conducting post-doctoral research in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut. Her research falls at the intersection of ancient DNA, archaeology, and community engagement, and has been funded by the National Science Foundation and National Geographic Society. She uses ancient DNA and population genetic methods to understand the population history of the colonial period of North America. These methods are then interpreted alongside archaeological and other bio-molecular techniques to understand lived experience, ancestry, and relationships on the early colonial American frontier. She is passionate about science education to engage students of all ages in the process of learning and discovery.



Dr. Carolyn Williams

<https://coastalvirginiamag.com/article/the-first-mom-of-music/>

Awards Ceremony, Friday 7:00 pm

The Power of Possibility

Dr. Carolyn Williams was the former Director of Education and Board Chair for From One Hand To Another (FOHTA), a non-profit that provided supplemental education to under-served youth. As an educator with extensive years of experience with the Virginia Beach City Public School System ranging from the classroom to administrative responsibilities, she is a graduate of Old Dominion University. Ms. Williams earned her Doctorate Degree from Regent University. She was a member of and graduated from the Futures Academy (VBCPS), served as President of Virginia Beach Library Association, sponsor of Diversity Leaders (VBCPS), and worked at individual schools. Dr. Williams was a member of National Education Association, Virginia Education Association, and Phi Delta Kappa. The ThinkGreen, curriculum written by Dr. Williams for the Urban League Young Professionals Hampton Roads chapter won a national award. She has also written, ThinkRead a reading curriculum used at one of FOHTA's summer camp locations along with ThinkInvestigate: Science Fair Projects for the Titusville, FL summer camp location (FOHTA).

Currently, Dr. Williams is a Senior Education Advisor for YELLOW, an organization to "EVEN THE ODDS" for all youth through education.

Education is an integral part of Dr. Williams' life; she has great enthusiasm for both attaining and sharing knowledge. Her other great love is her family.

Dr. Williams believes in the life mission to "Never be content with someone else's definition of you".



Dr. Bruce J. Holmes

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/brucejholmes/>

General Session III, Sat. 12:30 pm

Hey Dude! Where's my Flying Car!?

Remember the 1960's cartoon series *The Jetsons*? Ever wonder why George's flying car never made it into the 21st century? I am here to introduce the very viable plausibility that well within the lifetimes of the students you teach, and even likely within my lifetime, we will see modern day versions of George's flying car. Why and how might that now be? My own story in aviation started when flying with my father in our family airplane when *The Jetsons* first appeared and watching him fly from our neighborhood in the Chicago suburbs to the downtown waterfront airport, Meigs Field, and thinking, "Well, this is how everyone should be able to get around." Years later, during my NASA career as an aerospace research engineer, elements of that thinking stayed with me as my like-minded colleagues and we worked with industry and universities to develop the enabling technologies that now will support the concept of personalized, democratized, individualized air mobility – George Jetson-style. My presentation describes the story leading to Virginia's Department of Aviation decision to secure one of the most modern and exciting small airplanes, the ICON A5 amphibian aircraft, for use in STEM outreach. The story follows the technology development pathway of the 1990's and early 2000's that led to the production of the ICON A5. This airplane embodies virtually all the innovations that had roots in NASA-led public-private research partnerships focused on creating a new base of technologies for the U.S. small aircraft industry. The ICON can serve to inspire students today who may choose to follow career paths in aviation, aeronautics, or aerospace.