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Sen. Barbara Mikulski, Teen Research Phenom Jack Andraka, Freeman Hrabowski & Nancy Grasmick Headline National Convention

Gathering Will Also Launch First Event of Corporate Advisory Council

BALTIMORE (DATE) – A bevy of Free State leaders will be in the spotlight at the upcoming [annual convention](#) of the [National Association for Gifted Children \(NAGC\)](#), to be held November 13th to 16th in at the Baltimore Convention Center and Baltimore Hilton.

[Sen. Barbara Mikulski](#), Chair of the [Senate Appropriations Committee](#), will be honored with the David W. Belin Advocacy Award, which goes to an individual or organization that has advanced the gifted education field at the state or federal levels. A longtime advocate for high-achieving and high-potential students, Mikulski this past year led the effort to restore funding for the [Jacob Javits Gifted Education Grant Program](#), the only federal program focused on gifted students.

“Sen. Mikulski has long recognized the need to strengthen our nation’s commitment to our high-ability and high-potential students and the serious consequences we will suffer as a nation if we fail to do so. Her leadership to restore funding for the Javits program is the most recent example of this dedication. NAGC is thrilled to honor Sen. Mikulski while our convention is in her backyard,” said NAGC President Tracy L. Cross, the Jody and Layton Smith Professor of Psychology and Gifted Education and Executive Director of the Center for Gifted Education at the College of Williams & Mary.

[Dr. Nancy Grasmick](#), who spent 20 years serving as Maryland’s Superintendent of Schools and now serves as co-director of the world-renowned [Kennedy-Krieger Institute](#), will be honored with the 2014 NAGC President’s Award. Joining Dr. Grasmick as the co-recipient of the honor is Dr. Jeanne L. Paynter, who formerly oversaw gifted and talented issues within the state department of education.

“Throughout her tenure leading Maryland’s schools, Dr. Grasmick worked hard to focus energy and resources toward students with special needs, including our gifted learners. The President’s Award recognizes this career of service and leadership on behalf of gifted learners. I am honored to provide this recognition to both of these outstanding leaders,” noted Cross.

Mikulski, Grasmick and Paynter will all be honored at the Celebration of Excellence event, held Friday, November 14th.

In addition to the honorees, attendees will hear keynote remarks from teen cancer researcher Jack Andraka and from [University of Maryland Baltimore County \(UMBC\)](#) President [Freeman Hrabowski](#).

Hrabowski has been at the helm of UMBC for more than 20 years and has earned national renown for transforming the university into an institution focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education.

Andraka, a 17-year-old teen science wiz and Marylander, captured headlines two years ago by winning the prestigious top honor of the [Intel Science and Engineering Fair](#) for developing a novel technique to detect pancreatic cancer. The disease is a leading cause of cancer death because it is poorly detected until it has spread widely.

“Freeman Hrabowski and Jack Andraka epitomize what is possible when talent is nurtured and given the resources needed to thrive. Today, Dr. Hrabowski is using his leadership of UMBC to create opportunities for our next generation of talent, and Jack is striving to develop a potentially life-saving diagnostic. We are thrilled to have both join us at this year’s conference and hope all of our attendees will leave inspired,” Cross said.

Other speakers including mini-keynote addresses by [Dr. Adam Riess](#), a professor at Johns Hopkins who co-won the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physics for discovery that the universe is expanding, 2014 National Teacher of the Year [Sean McComb](#), a teacher at Patapsco High and Debbie Phelps, who knows a thing or two about developing talent.

On Saturday, November 15th, NAGC will hold the popular [Parent Day](#), an intensive session oriented toward educating local parents about the ins and outs of gifted education. And on Wednesday the 12th, NAGC will launch its newly constituted Corporate Advisory Group with an invitation-only gathering involving education and business leaders focusing on solutions to the nation's talent development challenges.

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