



# The SS-ASPB

November 2017

Newsletter of the Southern Section of the American Society of Plant Biologists

TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE THE GROWTH OF AND THE WELFARE AND  
GOOD FELLOWSHIPS OF PLANT BIOLOGISTS GENERALLY...

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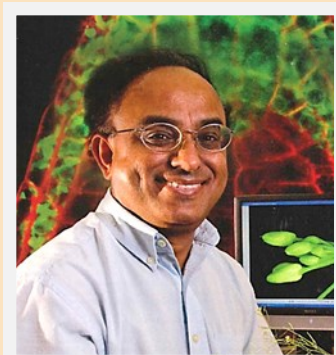
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## *Greetings from Dr. Nihal Dharmasiri 2017-2018 SS-ASPB Chair*

Hello, my Southern Section friends! Preparations are underway for another great SS-ASPB annual meeting in 2018. It will be held in beautiful New Orleans, Louisiana, from March 24-26. The meeting is being organized by our Secretary/Treasurer Dr. Aruna Kilaru, with the help of local organizer Dr. Jay Shockey. This will be another fantastic meeting that will be held at the historic Le Pavillon hotel. The Kriton Hatzios Symposium, titled “**Big data: Next Frontier in Plant Science**”, is being organized by our Vice-Chair Dr. Shahid Mukhtar. Dr. Philip Benfey (*Duke University*), Dr. Bob Schmitz (*University of Georgia*), Dr. Libo Shan (*Texas A&M*) and Dr. Jason Willams (*Cold Spring Harbor*) will talk about the latest developments in their research in this symposium. In addition to listening to these great speakers, our next meeting in New Orleans will be a great opportunity to meet with your colleagues in the Southern Section. As always, SS-ASPB meetings are more student and post-doc centered, so we especially encourage graduate and undergraduate students and postdocs to attend SS-ASPB meetings. Congratulations to our newly elected Secretary/Treasurer Dr. Magaly Rincón-Zachary of Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX. She has long been an active member of ASPB and the Southern Section. We are confident that she will be an excellent addition to our leadership. We would also like to thank Dr. Mautusi Mitra, University of West Georgia, for her willingness to run for the same office. So friends save the dates, March 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> and wait for more details soon on the next SS-ASPB meeting. We look forward to seeing you all in New Orleans, Louisiana.



## SS-ASPB 2018

### New Orleans, LA

### March 24-26, 2018

Greetings fellow SS-ASPB members! Please plan to join us for the 2018 annual meeting of the Southern Section of the American Society of Plant Biologists, to be held in the **Le Pavillon Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana, March 24-26, 2018**. The city is famous for its authentic cuisine, music (particularly jazz), and its annual celebrations and festivals, especially Mardi Gras, dating back to French colonial times. The historic 1880s Le Pavillon hotel is one of the grandest hotels in the Central Business District of New Orleans. Having survived the great depression, this historic building is often called “The Belle of New Orleans”. The hotel continues to practice old traditions in these modern days, while staying true to southern hospitality. The hotel is walking distance to many attractions such as the famous French quarter,—home to music, dining, shopping and the iconic Bourbon Street. A block of rooms has been reserved at a lower rate for SS-ASPB meeting attendees. If you need more information about the hotel or for reservations call 844-498-8577 or visit online: <http://www.lepavillon.com/>.



The topic of this year’s Kriton Hatzios Symposium is **“Big Data: the Next Frontier in Plant Science”**. Several excellent speakers (please see next page) will present their cutting-edge research at the symposium. SS-ASPB meetings keep our tradition of promoting plant science and education, especially focusing on graduate and undergraduate students, and postdocs. If you need further information regarding the 2018 SS-ASPB meeting, please contact either Dr. Aruna Kilaru, (Secretary/Treasurer; [KILARU@etsu.edu](mailto:KILARU@etsu.edu)) or Dr. Jay Shockey (local organizer; [Jay.Shockey@ars.usda.gov](mailto:Jay.Shockey@ars.usda.gov)).



## SS-ASPB 2018

### Kriton Hatzios Symposium

# Big Data: the Next Frontier in Plant Science

Dr. Shahid Mukhtar, Symposium Organizer

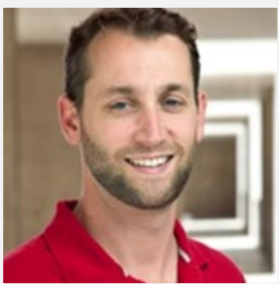
#### **“Underground signaling networks”**

**Dr. Philip Benfey**

Paul Kramer Professor and HHMI Investigator

Duke University and HHMI

<https://sites.duke.edu/benfey/>



#### **“Mapping and exploiting functional variation in crop genomes”**

**Dr. Bob Schmitz**

Associate Professor

University of Georgia at Athens

<https://schmitzlab.genetics.uga.edu/>

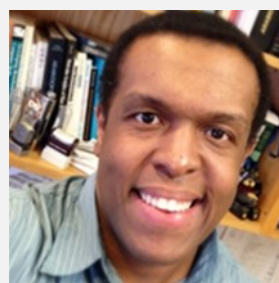
#### **“Microbial sensing and signaling from the plant cell membrane”**

**Dr. Libo Shan**

Associate Professor

Texas A&M University

<https://ipgb.tamu.edu/people/shan-libo/>



#### **“Data, Data Everywhere Nor Any a Drop to Drink”**

**Dr. Jason Williams**

Lead, CyVerse EOT

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

<https://www.dnalc.org/about/staff/williams.html>

## 2017 SS-ASPB Election Results

Congratulations to our newly elected 2018-2019 SS-ASPB  
Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Magaly Rincón-Zachary!



Dr. Magaly Rincón-Zachary is a Professor of Biology at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, TX. She received both her M.S. and Ph.D. in Plant Physiology from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1985. Her doctoral thesis work focused on the control of calcium influx in corn roots in response to injury under the direction of the late John B. Hanson. From there, Dr. Rincón-Zachary began her postdoctoral work as a research associate in the Botany department at North Carolina State University under Dr. Wendy Boss's mentorship, and, later, with the Noble Foundation, studying aluminum partitioning patterns in wheat roots. In 1992, she accepted a faculty position in the Biology department at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas. For 20 years her research primarily focused on aluminum

partitioning in root tissues and on the role of calcium on the differential aluminum sensitivity observed in roots and has published several articles on this subject. More recently, she and her students have been studying the role of melatonin in the germination of photoblastic tobacco seeds and identifying bacterial endophytes present in seeds containing various melatonin levels.

Dr. Rincón-Zachary served as the Biology Graduate Program Coordinator from August 1999 until August 2013. She has advised and directed master's thesis work for 16 students, many of whom, have gone to pursue doctoral degrees. In 2005, she spearheaded and directed an undergraduate research program titled "Undergraduate Research Opportunities and Summer Workshop (UGROW)" in the College of Science and Mathematics, which in 2013 became a part of the university's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Currently, she serves as the Director for the Office of Undergraduate Research at Midwestern State University overseeing two programs, UGROW and EURECA (Enhancing Undergraduate Research Endeavors and Creative Activities), aimed at institutionalizing undergraduate research. As Director for Undergraduate Research, she developed a research course titled, "Creative Inquiry: Interdisciplinary Thinking," and continues teaching Biology at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. She has been a member of ASPB since 1982.

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We're on the web!  
<http://ss-aspb.org/>



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## 2017-2018 SS-ASPB Officers

### *Chair*

#### **Dr. Nihal Dharmasiri**

Associate Professor  
Department of Biology  
Texas State University  
San Marcos, TX 78666  
512-245-4911  
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### *Vice-Chair*

#### **Dr. Shahid Mukhtar**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Biology  
University of Alabama Birmingham  
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### **Secretary/Treasurer**

#### **Dr. Aruna Kilaru**

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### *Executive Committee Members*

#### **Dr. Ken Korth**

Professor of Plant Pathology  
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Fayetteville, AR 72701  
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#### **Dr. Rick Turley**

Research Plant Physiologist  
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#### **Dr. Ashlee McCaskill**

### **2017-2020 Southern Section Representative to ASPB Executive Committee**

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