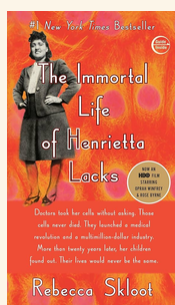


women in chemistry NEWSLETTER

SUMMER
2024

WiC Events Recap

Book Club
Spring 2024



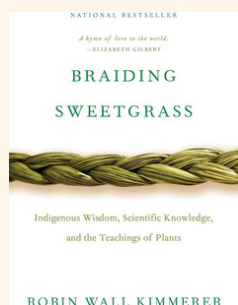
Summer Spotlight Speaker
July 16, 2024



Professor Claudia Avalos

Future WiC Events

Book Club
Fall 2024



Summer Spotlight Speaker
August 20, 2024



Merck
Dr. Rebecca Ruck

New York Stem Cell Foundation Visit
Fall 2024



Join the WiC slack for
updates!



WIC LEGENDS



Marie Maynard Daly

Who better to be the inaugural “WiC Legend” than renowned New York City Woman in Chemistry, Marie Maynard Daly!

Upon her graduation from Columbia in 1947 she was the first black woman to earn a PhD in Chemistry in the United States. She attended and worked at many New York City scientific institutions including Hunter College, Queens College, NYU, Columbia and the Rockefeller Institute. She earned a professorship at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine where she mentored students in both medicine and chemistry, and developed programs to promote enrollment of minority students in STEM graduate programs in the city.

As WiC continues its efforts to build up underrepresented chemists in NYC, we look to Marie Maynard Daly as an inspiration for her dedication to the inclusion of all people in the field of STEM. Learn more about Marie Maynard Daly by viewing the exhibition in the lobby of our very own Havemeyer Hall!

MEET THE DEPARTMENT

**Get to know
Assistant Professor
Makeda Tekle-Smith!**



***Tell us a little bit about your background!
What was it like growing up in Santa Barbara?***

I loved growing up in Santa Barbara, California. I love everything about the beach and try to get there as often as I can. My mom is a preschool teacher and I think I gained my passion for teaching and appreciation for the natural world from her. My brother is a farmer and he still kindly sends me foods grown in Santa Barbara so I can have a taste of home with me wherever I go.

Can you remember what first sparked your interest in chemistry?

I've had an affinity for chemistry since high school, but I was drawn to synthesis in particular once I took organic chemistry in college. I had incredible professors at Pomona College, including Prof. Cynthia Selassie and Prof. Daniel O'Leary, that showed me how organic chemistry is the world around us. The idea that you could draw a structure on paper in the morning and go make it with your own hands in the afternoon blew me away. I don't think I will ever get over the feeling of successfully making something new in the lab. One of the things that always has and will continue to drive me is the goal of making new materials and technologies that make the world better.

How do you like to spend your time when you're not working?

Probably my favorite activity is playing soccer. I got a soccer ball for my 1-year-old birthday and have been playing ever since. I also watch a lot of sports. This summer was particularly fun watching Copa America, the Euro Cup, and the Olympics. One of my favorite things about being in New York is the easy access to so many art museums and galleries. A highlight from this past year for me was seeing Henry Taylor's exhibition at the Whitney.

***If you could instantly learn any skill,
what would it be?***

If I could learn one skill, it would probably be riding a bike. Seems pretty useful.

***How do you motivate yourself when
you're feeling stuck?***

It usually depends on what type of stuck I'm dealing with.

There are a few things that I do for motivation:

- 1) take a step back from whatever task I'm trying to accomplish and let my mind focus on something completely different**
- 2) start reading anything and everything on topic I'm working on with no real goal in mind**
- 3) talk to other people about what I'm trying to do.**

The thing all of these approaches have in common is that they help me gain a different perspective on what I'm working on.

Do you have any advice for grad students that you wish you had?

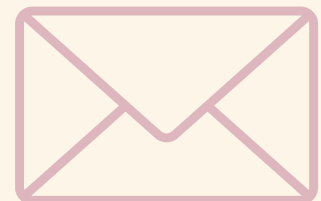
One of the things that I wish I had been told is to invest time mastering transferable skills. Putting together a good slide deck, using and maintaining specialized equipment, knowing basic coding, and other similar skills can make career progression post-grad school much easier. Additionally, I wish that I had been told that making friends and maintaining those relationships in grad school would be one of the most important things I did over those 5 years. It is very much worth it to invest time in the people around you.



Thank you, Makeda!

Want to nominate a professor, faculty, or staff member for the next newsletter?

Email



wiccolumbiauniversity@gmail.com

HOBBY HIGHLIGHTS

POTTERY & CERAMICS

*“ My favorite glazes are blue. **It’s chemistry!** The way they interact to form textures or new colors.”*



“I like trying new combinations of glazes, especially the drippy ones! Fun fact: I made all my Christmas gifts last year.”



Jordan Cox, Roy Lab 4th year

HOBBY HIGHLIGHTS

FILMMAKING & WRITING

“I make short independent films, and write children and short stories in my spare time. I started writing since I was little and wanted to write scripts and be a filmmaker for the past 6 years.”

“I made both of my short films in graduate school, having found inspiration and support from independent filmmakers in NYC.”



Check out Bereket's short films on Youtube!

[Splintered](#) 

[Nebulous Nostalgia](#) 

Bereket Zekarias, Owen Lab 5th year

Do **you** have a super cool hobby?!?

Does **your labmate** have an awesome hobby?!?



***Submit here to be featured
in future newsletters!***