

NEWS RELEASE

MassRobotics Announces Recipient of 2024 Robotics Medal Recognizing Accomplishments of Women in Robotics

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BOSTON, MA / ACCESSWIRE / September 26, 2024 / MassRobotics, a leading robotics innovation organization, announced its 2024 Robotics Medal and Rising Star recipients at the IEEE ICRA@40 conference in Rotterdam, Netherlands. The Robotics Medal is the world's first major prize to recognize the wide-ranging impact of female researchers focusing on the development of robotics around the globe. The Robotics Medal is awarded to a woman-identifying, researcher-nominated professor in robotics to recognize their impactful contributions to the field and includes a \$50K prize awarded to the individual. The Rising Star Awards recognize up-and-coming woman-identifying persons making strides and advancing the field of robotics and includes a \$5K award given to the individuals.

This 2nd Annual MassRobotics Robotics Medal award, sponsored by [Amazon Robotics](#), will be presented to Dr. Cynthia Breazeal at the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) for her significant contributions to the field of robotics, notably for her work establishing the field of social robotics and human-robot interaction.

This year two Rising Star awards were announced. Dr. Heather Culbertson at the [University of Southern California](#) will be awarded the MassRobotics Rising Star in Robotics Medal for her innovative contributions that leverage knowledge of the human sense of touch to create virtual haptic interactions that are indistinguishable from real life.

Dr. Josie Hughes, at [École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne \(EPFL\)](#), will receive a Rising Star Medal for her key contributions to soft robot design and fabrication, enabling robots with novel functionalities and proposing approaches that provide distributed Intelligence.

To encourage diversity in the field of robotics, Amazon established an endowment with MassRobotics in 2022 to support these annual awards. The purpose of The Robotics Medal is not only to celebrate individual achievements, but also to inspire and encourage women and other underrepresented groups to participate in shaping the future of the world through robotics.

"By endowing the Robotics Medal, we aspire to showcase and celebrate women robotics professors worldwide who have made a significant impact to the advancement of the field of robotics," said Tye Brady, chief technologist at Amazon Robotics and chair of MassRobotics' board. "It is an honor to be the founding sponsor of the Robotics Medal and we are thankful for the significant contributions and teachings made by our rising stars and legendary pioneers in the field of robotics and artificial intelligence."

Nominations for the awards came from all around the United States including Texas, Washington, Massachusetts, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, and Pennsylvania, as well as across the globe from countries including Canada, Japan, Germany, Spain, Netherlands, Switzerland, and India. Submissions spanned a wide range of robotic technology fields and areas of research, from new materials for gripping, exoskeletons and assistive technologies, human-robot interaction, and motion planning.

Since 2017, MassRobotics has grown from a Massachusetts-based incubator to a global robotics hub, helping support the adoption of robotics worldwide and providing startups with the resources needed to grow and scale. Of the current 85+ startups that MassRobotics houses at its facility in Boston, more than 50% are from out of state and 25% are from outside the U.S.

MassRobotics hosts STEM and robotics initiatives specifically developed for high school women and continues to promote women in robotics through events and networking to ensure women are recognized and heard.

"We were thrilled by the overwhelming number of qualified nominations we received and impressed with the diversity of robotic fields and research happening across the globe," said Joyce Sidopoulos, cofounder at MassRobotics. "It reflects the powerful contributions women have made, and will continue to make, to this important, vibrant, and growing field supporting nearly all industries."

The Robotics Medal and Rising Star recipients were selected by a committee of robotics experts, led by MassRobotics, which convened several times and methodically evaluated the significance, depth, and originality of technical contributions each nominee has made in the overall field of robotics.

"The field of robotics urgently needs the insights, creativity, and leadership that more female professionals can bring to drive innovation across the science, engineering, and real-world applications of this pivotal discipline," says Daniela Rus, Director of the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) at MIT and member of

the MassRobotics board. "The Robotics Medal represents much more than its monetary value; it stands as a symbol of recognition and celebration of the extraordinary achievements of women who have broken new ground in robotics. These pioneers lead by example, ignite curiosity and ambition in the next generation of roboticists, and inspire future innovators."

A formal Gala awarding the medals and celebrating the recipients will be held in Boston at the MIT Samberg Conference Center on October 26, 2024. Tickets and reserved tables for the event are available [here](#).

MassRobotics has created an endowment and welcomes contributions to support future cash prizes for The Robotics Medal. Contact award@massrobotics.org to learn about becoming an underwriter of The Robotics Medal. Nominations for the 2025 Robotics Medal and Rising Star are now open and must be received by December 20th, 2024. More information can be found [here](#).

About MassRobotics

MassRobotics is the largest independent robotics hub dedicated to accelerating robotics innovation, commercialization, and adoption. Our mission is to help create and scale the next generation of successful robotics and AI technology companies by providing entrepreneurs and startups with the workspace, resources, programming, and connections they need to develop, prototype, test, and commercialize their products and solutions. While MassRobotics originated and is headquartered in Boston, we reach and support robotics acceleration and adoption globally. We work with startups, academia, industry, and governments both domestically and internationally. See massrobotics.org for details.

About Amazon

Amazon is guided by four principles: customer obsession rather than competitor focus, passion for invention, commitment to operational excellence, and long-term thinking. Amazon strives to be Earth's Most Customer-Centric Company, Earth's Best Employer, and Earth's Safest Place to Work. Customer reviews, 1-Click shopping, personalized recommendations, Prime, Fulfillment by Amazon, AWS, Kindle Direct Publishing, Kindle, Career Choice, Fire tablets, Fire TV, Amazon Echo, Alexa, Just Walk Out technology, Amazon Studios, and The Climate Pledge are some of the things pioneered by Amazon. For more information, visit amazon.com/about and follow [@AmazonNews](https://twitter.com/AmazonNews).

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