

Dr. Rita R. Colwell  
Distinguished University Professor, University of Maryland College Park and  
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Senior Advisor and Chairman Emeritus, Canon U. S. Life Sciences  
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Dr. Rita Colwell is Distinguished University Professor both at the University of Maryland at College Park and at Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, Senior Advisor and Chairman Emeritus, Canon US Life Sciences, Inc., and President and CEO of CosmosID, Inc. Her interests are focused on global infectious diseases, water, and health, and she is currently developing an international network to address emerging infectious diseases and water issues, including safe drinking water for both the developed and developing world.

Dr. Colwell served as the 11th Director of the National Science Foundation, 1998-2004. In her capacity as NSF Director, she served as Co-chair of the Committee on Science of the National Science and Technology Council. One of her major interests include K-12 science and mathematics education, graduate science and engineering education and the increased participation of women and minorities in science and engineering.

Dr. Colwell has held many advisory positions in the U.S. Government, nonprofit science policy organizations, and private foundations, as well as in the international scientific research community. She is a nationally-respected scientist and educator, and has authored or co-authored 17 books and more than 750 scientific publications. She produced the award-winning film, *Invisible Seas*, and has served on editorial boards of numerous scientific journals.

Before going to NSF, Dr. Colwell was President of the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute and Professor of Microbiology and Biotechnology at the University Maryland. She was also a member of the National Science Board from 1984 to 1990.

Dr. Colwell has previously served as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the American Academy of Microbiology and also as President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Washington Academy of Sciences, the American Society for Microbiology, the Sigma Xi National Science Honorary Society, and the International Union of Microbiological Societies. Dr. Colwell is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, the Royal Society of Canada, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society. She is Immediate Past-President of the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS).

Dr. Colwell has also been awarded 55 honorary degrees from institutions of higher education, including her Alma Mater, Purdue University and is the recipient of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, bestowed by the Emperor of Japan, the 2006 National Medal of Science awarded by the President of the United States, and the 2010 Stockholm Water Prize awarded by the King of Sweden. Dr. Colwell is an honorary member of the microbiological societies of the UK, Australia, France, Israel, Bangladesh, Czechoslovakia, Royal Irish Academy, and the U.S. and has held several honorary professorships, including the University of Queensland, Australia. A geological site in Antarctica, Colwell Massif, has been named in recognition of her work in the polar regions.

Born in Beverly, Massachusetts, Dr. Colwell holds a B.S. in Bacteriology and an M.S. in Genetics, from Purdue University, and a Ph.D. in Oceanography from the University of Washington.