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Erica Ollmann Sapphire wins 2023 Pantheon Award from California Life Sciences

LJI President and CEO celebrated among California's leading life sciences innovators

LA JOLLA, CA — California Life Sciences ([CLS](#)), the state's life sciences trade association, has awarded [Erica Ollmann Sapphire, Ph.D.](#), the 2023 Pantheon Award for Academia, Non-Profit, & Research. The award recognizes Sapphire's leadership and innovative research toward addressing the urgent need for effective antibody therapeutics against COVID-19 and viral threats such as Ebola and Lassa virus.

Sapphire serves as Professor, President and CEO at La Jolla Institute for Immunology ([LJI](#)), a world-renowned, non-profit research institute where scientists focus on every aspect of the immune system. Under her leadership, LJI researchers have launched new initiatives to accelerate [vaccine innovation](#), decipher [sex-based differences in the immune system](#), and more. [[Learn more: "Erica Ollmann Sapphire takes the helm"](#)]

“Congratulations to Erica Ollmann Sapphire on her well-deserved Pantheon Award win,” said CLS CEO and President, Mike Guerra. “She’s a shining example of California's exceptional life sciences innovators and entrepreneurs. As we commemorate Pantheon’s 20th anniversary, we celebrate her and anticipate her continued contributions to science in the years to come.”

Sapphire's own laboratory has made major breakthroughs in understanding deadly viruses at the molecular level. Her work has revealed important antibody targets—or weak points—on deadly viruses such as Ebola, Lassa, Marburg, and SARS-CoV-2. This research is key to developing new vaccines and antibody therapeutics.

Sapphire also has established valuable partnerships with laboratories around the world—turning competitors into collaborators, as she puts it. After serving as director of the international Viral Hemorrhagic Fever Immunotherapeutic Consortium ([ViC](#)), Sapphire went on to direct the Coronavirus Immunotherapeutic Consortium ([CoVIC](#)), a massive international push to find antibodies to fight SARS-CoV-2.

In her Pantheon Award acceptance speech, Sapphire lauded the hard work and innovative thinking that put many LJI laboratories at the forefront of SARS-CoV-2 research. "I am immensely proud of what we were able to accomplish by coming together and getting to work for the greater public good during a time of need."

"It is with deep gratitude that I accept the California Life Sciences Pantheon Award on behalf of La Jolla Institute for Immunology," Sapphire added. "It means a great deal to me that the Institute is recognized in this way."

[Pantheon](#) brings together more than 500 industry pioneers each year to recognize the contributions of leading life sciences innovators in the state. Winners were announced at the Nov. 1 awards ceremony in San Francisco.

About La Jolla Institute

The La Jolla Institute for Immunology is dedicated to understanding the intricacies and power of the immune system so that we may apply that knowledge to promote human health and prevent a wide range of diseases. Since its founding in 1988 as an independent, nonprofit research organization, the Institute has made numerous advances leading toward its goal: life without disease. Visit lji.org for more information.