



Nina Cohen
Chemical Applications



Kasandra Wright
Concept 2 Consumer

FUTURE LEADERS AWARD

The **AATCC Future Leaders Award** recognizes promising young professionals in the fields of textiles, apparel, and related material sciences, provides acknowledgment and recognition to enhance their careers, engages these young professionals in the work of the Association, and brings their insights and needs to the forefront. These young professionals are the future of the textile industry and the future leaders of AATCC. Award recipients represent the various AATCC Interest Groups.

AATCC is proud to introduce this year's recipients of the AATCC Future Leaders Award.

Chemical Applications

Nina Cohen is an application engineer at Microban International Inc. Cohen has been with Microban International Inc. since 2023 and represents the company on various AATCC research committees. At Microban International Inc., she is an engineering lead for new product development in apparel, home, medical, industrial, and other materials. She is a technical lead in formula and process recommendations, collecting data, and scaling up processes to mill trials. Cohen led the development and launch of Microban's H₂O shield water repellents, and qualified new formats for Microban International Inc. In 2017, Cohen graduated with her BS in Textile Development and Marketing from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, NY, USA. After receiving her BS, Cohen received an MS in Textile Apparel Technology Management from North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC, USA.

Since joining AATCC in 2019, Cohen has been an active member in the Piedmont Section and on several research committees. Cohen is a voting member of RA63 Water Resistance Test Methods and RA115 PFAS (Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substance) Test Methods research committees. She is also a member of RA100 Global Sustainability Test Methods, RA104 Garment Wet Processing Technology, and RA113 Emerging Issues Test Methods research committees. Cohen has attended multiple AATCC conferences and workshops.

Concept 2 Consumer

Kasandra Wright is an omni associate merchant at Walmart Inc, where she is the lead of the Merchandising Development Program intern outreach committee and the direct contact and mentor for Walmart Inc. interns. Wrights' foundation in apparel merchandising and product development enables her to pursue her interests and further develop skills in sustainable practices within the arts management field. Before working at Walmart Inc., Wright worked as a teaching aide at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, AR, USA. She also worked as a costume designer and stagehand coordinator at Crowder College, in Neosho, MO, USA. In 2022, Wright earned an AAS in Apparel and Textile Marketing Management from Crowder College, and in 2024, graduated with a BS in Apparel Merchandising and Product Development from the University of Arkansas.

Wright has been an active member of AATCC since 2023. Wright is an AATCC Foundation Textile Merchandising Scholarship recipient and was President of the AATCC Student Chapter at the University of Arkansas. She is currently



Matthew Swartz
Materials

the Vice-Chair of the Ozarks Section and was instrumental in organizing the section's spring 2026 meeting. Wright has attended multiple conferences, including the 2024 Textile Discovery Summit and several Interest Group meetings.

Materials

Matthew Swartz is a senior manager of material color quality and surface design for Patagonia Inc. Swartz has been with Patagonia Inc. since 2015 and has held several key positions since starting his career there. Swartz's career at Patagonia started as a color advisor, and he has progressed to color & material quality engineer and manager, and then senior manager of color and surface design quality. He currently leads Patagonia Inc.'s color department, where he has modernized color operations into digital best practice, has advanced sustainable dyeing across the supply chain, championed undyed programs as a design-led sustainability, and engineering brand-color standards across fiber types and built a design-facing feasibility process for color on complex technical materials. Before his career with Patagonia Inc., Swartz was a research and development polymer chemist with ChemSee (Appealing Products Inc.) and a production dyer at Tumbling Colors. Swartz has been published in a press release from Patagonia Inc., and has presented at several industry conferences. Swartz earned a BS in Polymer and Color Chemistry from North Carolina State University in 2012.

Since joining AATCC in 2015, Swartz has been an active member. Swartz attended several AATCC industry events and presented at the AATCC Managing Today's Textile Coloration Challenges: From Fiber to Fashion Conference in 2017. He is an active member of the California Section.



Eberenna Igba
Rising Professionals

Rising Professionals

Eberenna Igba is a weaving technician at Cotton Incorporated. Igba is currently working in the product development lab at Cotton Incorporated and is assisting the technical manager of wovens on various cotton-based projects. These projects include new woven fabric development for Cotton Incorporated's Fabricast line as well as projects to develop new characteristics of cotton. Prior to working at Cotton Incorporated, Igba worked as a textile engineer and technology senior designer at Under Armor. In 2022, Igba graduated with a BS in Textile Technology with a concentration in Medical Textiles from North Carolina State University.

Igba has been an active member since joining in 2024. He is the secretary of RA100 Global Sustainability Test Methods and is a member of the subcommittee for the research committee. He is also an active member of the Executive Committee on Research. Igba has attended several AATCC conferences and Interest Group meetings and is an active member of the Piedmont Section.

The Award

The AATCC Future Leaders Award recipients will receive a framed certificate and pin. The awards will be presented during the Awards Luncheon on October 6, 2026, at the AATCC International Summit, held at the Hotel Ballast Wilmington, Wilmington, NC, USA.

For information about the Future Leaders Award, and a list of past recipients, visit www.aatcc.org/leaders.