EL SUR
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(https://suracapulco.mx/impreso/)

Society

Mónica Olvera de la Cruz, a scientist from Acapulco who is making a name for herself in the US, is recognized. (https://suracapulco.mx/impreso/8/reconocen-a-monica-olvera-de-la-cruz-cientifica-acapulquena-que-trasciende-en-eu/)

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Her work in the fields of physics and biology has led her to become a member of the nation's academies. She is receiving the Laureana Wright Woman of History award, along with visual artist Ana Barreto and women's rights activist Marina Reyna Aguilar.

November 10, 2025

(https://s3.amazonaws.com/ultimas.elsur/impreso/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/09231309/ElSur-reconocimientoMujeres-compressed.jpg)

Scientist Mónica Olvera de la Cruz during her speech after receiving the award; the other two award winners, artist Ana Barreto and activist Marina Reyna Aguilar, look on attentively. Photo: El Sur

Oscar Ricardo Muñoz Cano

The English writer DH Lawrence said: "we are the dreams of our grandmothers; not those they lived openly, but the secret ones: those they dreamed hidden away," and for the Acapulco scientist Mónica Olvera de la Cruz, it was more than a quote; it was a kind of revelation that acquired meaning over the years.

"My grandmother, Romana de la Cruz, was a teacher in Tecpan de Galena. She founded several educational institutions and was married to Valente de la Cruz, a revolutionary, also a teacher, who was leader of the agrarian struggle in Guerrero. But when they came to live in Acapulco, my mother (Rosalba de la Cruz) was put to work," she recounted in a brief chat last Saturday, after receiving the Laureana Wright Woman of History award at the San Diego Fort Museum, along with visual artist Ana Barreto and social activist Marina Reyna Aguilar. Wright was a writer born in Taxco and a precursor of feminist thought, whose journalistic contributions and various writings on the role of women were revolutionary in her time. The award was presented by the civil association of the same name.

However, she continued, "My mother always wanted to be an inventor, and when she was writing her books (she ended up being a writer), she would ask me how things worked. She always dreamed of knowing things from a young age, and she always told me stories from when she was a child and wanted to know, but there was nothing in Tecpan back then."

"When she came to Acapulco, when I was born, she would tell me stories about my grandmother, about when they lived in Tecpan, about how, despite her thirst for knowledge, there wasn't much to learn in that town on the Costa Grande, and my grandmother would find a way."

That thirst for knowledge didn't stop, she emphasized, "She read a lot, she sought knowledge, and although my mother never told me about her dreams, or my grandmother's dreams, she passed them on to me."

A theoretical condensed matter physicist, professor of Materials Science and Engineering, professor of Chemistry, and professor of Physics and Astronomy and Chemical and Biological Engineering at Northwestern University in Illinois, USA, is just the beginning of the curriculum vitae of this 67-year-old scientist from Acapulco.

Moreover, she took the study of the Covid-19 virus personally after her brother, notary public Sergio Olvera de la Cruz, fell ill during the 2020 pandemic, achieving significant progress in understanding the electrostatic interactions of the virus that bind it to human cells—a path toward the development of vaccines.

"I'm very close to my brother; he lives here (in Acapulco). When he got sick, I immediately became interested in finding knowledge to help combat the virus, and I conducted a series of specific studies." These studies, carried out in conjunction with a group of scientists, were published in ACS Nano, the monthly scientific journal of the American Chemical Society, in August 2020.

After so many years since her childhood in Acapulco, and so many years living in the United States, where she is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Physical Society, it's difficult, she admitted, to recall the exact moment, the epiphany, that led her here. But she affirmed that "I was between eight and ten years old when I started noticing the physical phenomena of the world." So, once she had the opportunity, she traveled to Mexico City to study Physics at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). And then, to obtain a doctorate from the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

"I am a mother, a wife, a sister; I like to dance or read—I read a lot—because I am always curious about the things that happen in the world, in the material world, and while that curiosity is inherited, must be developed." She recommended that all those children and young people in places like Guerrero who feel an attraction to science, despite the lack of opportunities to develop it, should not give up.

"You should never stop, much less turn back; the interest in knowing may be innate, but it must be developed, it must be preserved. It is an incredible experience to be able to understand things. To this day, I continue searching for a way to explain the world, its phenomena, and that curiosity should not be abandoned because it is what makes us evolve."