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Currently a Senior Scientist at NASA Ames Research Center, Adjunct Professor in BioMolecular Engineering at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a Fellow of the California Academy of Sciences, he earned a PhD at Scripps Institution of Oceanography and conducted previous research at the Max Planck Institute for Biochemistry in Germany, Århus and Copenhagen Universities in Denmark, University of Paris at Orsay in France, Boyer Center for Molecular Medicine at Yale Medical School and Argonne National Laboratory in the USA.

After leading the NASA OMEGA biofuels project, he founded the OMEGA Global Initiative (OGI) and UpCycle Systems (UCS) dedicated to developing the food, water, energy nexus, improving the environment, promoting circular economies, and adapting civilization to climate change.