**BARBIE MAKER MATTEL LAUNCHES NEW LINE OF CORONAVIRUS-FIGHTING DOLLS**

British Professor Sarah Gilbert, one of the co-creators of the Oxford/AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine, has been honored with her own Barbie doll as part of a series dedicated to inspirational women fighting the coronavirus pandemic. [...] The creation, Gilbert said, left her feeling “very strange.”

“My wish is that my doll will show children careers they may not be aware of, like a vaccinologist,” Gilbert said, adding she wants future generations to be aware that they, too, could work in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), in which women have historically been underrepresented.

Lisa McKnight, senior vice president and global head of Barbie and Dolls at Mattel, said, “Barbie recognizes that all frontline workers have made tremendous sacrifices when confronting the pandemic and the challenges it heightened,” the Guardian reported.

“To shine a light on their efforts, we are sharing their stories,” she continued, adding that the company hoped the series would “inspire the next generation to take after these heroes.”

Other dolls created as part of the series include Amy O’Sullivan, a nurse who worked in Brooklyn amid the coronavirus pandemic and appeared on the cover of Time magazine’s issue featuring the 100 Most Influential People in 2020. [...]

Canadian doctor and writer Chika Stacy Oriuwa, who is working to eliminate racism in the health-care system [...] was also honored along with Australia’s Kirby White, a doctor who co- created reusable protective gear for those treating covid-19 patients.

According to STEM Women, an organization based in the United Kingdom that provides inclusion and diversity recruitment resources to employers and young people, 35 percent of STEM students are women. [...] The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, which Gilbert helped create, is now widely used to protect people around the world from the coronavirus.

Last month, the product celebrated the milestone of distributing 1 billion doses, although Sir Andrew Pollard, a professor and director of the Oxford Vaccine Group, warned that the crisis is not over.

“It was hard work and it still is, but it’s hard work doing something that really matters,” Gilbert said in remarks made earlier this year, adding that a “huge” number of people joined forces to make the jab possible in such a short space of time.

In June, Gilbert was recognized with a damehood and led Queen Elizabeth II’s Birthday Honors list, which championed the “extraordinary efforts” of those who helped others throughout the pandemic.

More than 4 million people worldwide have died amid the global health crisis, with the United Kingdom — which has had at least 130,000 deaths — among the countries most affected by Covid-19. [...] In 2019, as part of the company’s “Inspiring Women” series, dolls were made to honor Rosa Parks.

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