

speech

PREPARED REMARKS FOR GOVERNOR JAMES R. THOMPSON

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

ILLINOIS MATH AND SCIENCE ACADEMY

PARAMOUNT ARTS CENTRE

AURORA, ILLINOIS

JUNE 10, 1989

• RECOGNITION OF LEON LEDERMAN, DR. MARSHALL, FACULTY, STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

THERE IS A LOT OF PRIDE HERE TODAY, AND IT'S NOT LIMITED TO YOU GRADUATES.

I THINK I KNOW WHAT YOUR PARENTS ARE FEELING TODAY . . . AND YOUR GRANDPARENTS . . . AND AUNTS AND UNCLES.

THEY'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS DAY . . . AS HAVE YOUR INSTRUCTORS.

LEON LEDERMAN AND I HAVE BEEN WAITING, TOO.

SO, EXCUSE US IF OUR PRIDE SHOWS ON WHAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE YOUR SPECIAL DAY.

WHenever I am introduced to a crowd, I am invariably referred to as the state's first governor to be elected to four terms in office.

Now, you also are firsts -- the first class of graduates from the nation's first three-year residential math and science academy.

IF THIS WERE A SCIENCE EXPERIMENT, WE'D REFER TO YOU AS THE GUINEA PIGS. IF THIS WERE A SCIENCE EXPERIMENT -- BY ALL MEASURES -- WE WOULD PRONOUNCED IT A STUNNING SUCCESS.

AND WHILE YOU ARE THE FIRST CLASS TO BE GRADUATED BY THE ACADEMY, YOU ARE JUST THE LATEST IN A LONG LINE OF "FIRSTS" IN ILLINOIS.

THIS IS THE STATE OF CYRUS MCCORMICK, WHO HELPED REVOLUTIONIZE FARMING WITH THE INVENTION AND WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION OF THE REAPER, AND THIS IS THE STATE OF JOHN DEERE, WHOSE STEEL WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO SLICE THROUGH ILLINOIS' PRAIRIES.

IT IS THE STATE OF HYBRID SEED CORN PIONEERS LIKE GENE FUNK IN BLOOMINGTON AND THE STATE OF GAIL BORDEN, WHO INVENTED CONDENSED MILK PACKAGES FOR LONG-DISTANCE TRANSPORTATION.

THE LIST OF "FIRSTS" IS IMPRESSIVE . . . THE FIRST EXPERIMENTAL SOYBEANS IN UNIVERSITY GREENHOUSES, THE COUNTRY'S FIRST TALKING COMPUTER FOR USE BY THE BLIND, THE INVENTION OF THE TRANSISTOR, AND PLATO -- THE FIRST COMPUTER USED FOR DIRECT EDUCATION.

IN CHICAGO, WE HAD THE FIRST MODERN SKYSCRAPER -- CONSTRUCTION BEGAN ON WILLIAM L. JENNY'S HOME INSURANCE BUILDING IN 1884 -- AND WE HAD THE FIRST MAIL ORDER CATALOG OPERATION WHEN SEARS-ROEBUCK BEGAN CATALOG SALES IN 1895.

IN THE SUBURBS, THE VERY FIRST McDONALD'S RESTAURANT OPENED IN DES PLAINES.

AND DOWNSTATE, THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS BOASTS THE NATION'S FIRST COLLEGE CHEERLEADER (1902), THE FIRST COLLEGE HOMECOMING CELEBRATION (1910), AND THE FIRST MARCHING BAND TO SPELL WORDS WHILE PLAYING MUSIC (1910).

AND YOU NEVER KNOW FROM WHERE THE NEXT BREAKTHROUGH WILL COME. AN OVERRIPE CANTALOUPE AT A PEORIA FRUIT STAND LED TO THE DISCOVERY OF A NEW MOLD STRAIN AND HELPED ABBOTT LABS PIONEER THE FIRST PHASE OF COMMERCIAL PENICILLIN PRODUCTION.

OF COURSE, ONE OF OUR MOST FAMOUS SCIENTIFIC "FIRSTS" CAME ON DECEMBER 12, 1942 -- BENEATH THE GRANDSTAND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO'S STAGG FIELD WHERE ENRICO FERMI AND AMERICAN SCIENTISTS BEGAN THE ATOMIC AGE WITH THE FIRST SUSTAINED NUCLEAR REACTION.

AND OUR FRIEND LEON LEDERMAN AND OTHER FERMILAB SCIENTISTS  
DISCOVERED THE SO-CALLED "BOTTOM QUARK" IN 1977. WHO KNOWS? THEY  
MAY FIND THAT SIXTH QUARK YET TODAY.

IF I TOLD YOU ABOUT ALL OF THE ILLINOIS FIRSTS, I WOULD BECOME  
THE NATION'S FIRST COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER TO TALK FOR MORE THAN TWO  
HOURS. I WILL SPARE YOU THAT DUBIOUS HONOR.

THE WORLD YOU ENTER TODAY KNOWS NO BOUNDS. THE POSSIBILITIES  
BEFORE YOU ARE ENDLESS. THERE ARE MYSTERIES TO UNLOCK.

WHILE SOMETIMES TRYING, THE WORLD ALSO CAN BRING YOU GREAT  
SATISFACTION

FOR TOO MANY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES - TODAY'S WORLD IS ABOUT AS  
BIG AS IT IS GOING TO GET. THEY'VE SPENT TWELVE YEARS IN SCHOOL,  
CRAMMING FOR EXAMS, WAITING FOR THE LIBRARY TO OPEN, TYPING TERM  
PAPERS, AND WORRYING ABOUT GRADES -- AND MOST OF THEM ARE GLAD TO  
SEE IT END.

I KNOW YOU WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN TO YOU. YOU WILL SEE TO IT THAT YOUR WORLD GROWS.

THIS ACADEMY HAS "MATH AND SCIENCE" IN ITS NAME, BUT IT ALSO MADE CERTAIN THAT YOU WERE EXPOSED TO THE CLASSICS OF LITERATURE. WILL YOU EVER PICK UP ANOTHER NOVEL BY FAULKNER, BY DICKENS, BY TWAIN? I HOPE YOU WILL.

MAYBE YOU TOOK AN ANTHROPOLOGY COURSE AND LEARNED ABOUT THE BEGINNINGS OF OUR CULTURE, ABOUT CIVILIZATIONS THAT HUNTED THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIES THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO. WAS YOUR INTEREST PIQUED? OR WERE YOU JUST IN IT FOR THE CREDIT HOURS?

MAYBE YOUR ART CLASSES EXPOSED YOU THE WORKS OF THE GREAT MASTERS. YOU CAN BE A GREAT SCIENTIST OR MATHEMATICIAN WITHOUT KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DALI AND MONET. BUT WILL YOUR EXPOSURE TO ART BE LIMITED TO YOUR UNIVERSITY'S ART HISTORY 101 COURSE?

YOUR WORK -- AND PLAY -- WITH COMPUTERS OPENED A WORLD THAT DID NOT EXIST FOR MY GENERATION. AND IT'S A WORLD THAT EXPANDS DAY-BY-DAY. SEE TO IT THAT YOU HELP IT EXPAND AND PUT IT TO GOOD USE.

YOUR GOVERNMENT COURSES EXPOSED YOU TO MY WORLD, BUT I CAN SAY WITH CERTAINTY THAT YOU DIDN'T LEARN IT ALL -- ALTHOUGH I'M SURE YOU LEARNED A GREAT DEAL LOBBYING THE LEGISLATURE FOR MORE FUNDING.

DON'T WASH YOUR HANDS OF THE PROCESS. GOVERNMENT HAS A BEARING ON EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE -- FROM THE CREATION OF THIS ACADEMY TO THE EXPLORATION OF OUTERSPACE . . . TO SAY NOTHING ABOUT HOW GOVERNMENT IMPACTS YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE.

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT. WE NEED YOU ON THE PLAYING FIELD.

AS YOU ENTER THIS EXPANDING WORLD, NOTE ALSO THAT IT IS A CONSTANTLY CHANGING WORLD.

MOST AMERICANS, BEYOND THE AGE OF 25, CHANGE OCCUPATIONS THREE TIMES AND JOBS SIX TIMES.

WE SEE IT ALL OVER AMERICA.

ONE-HALF OF THE PEOPLE NOW WORKING WILL NEED RETRAINING BY THE  
TURN OF THE CENTURY.

YOU'LL NEED RETRAINING, TOO. YOUR EDUCATION CONTINUES. IT  
DOESN'T END.

IF YOU'RE NOT CONVINCED, JUST CONSIDER WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE  
BRIEF TIME THAT I HAVE SERVED AS GOVERNOR -- WHICH BEGAN AT  
APPROXIMATELY THE SAME TIME MOST OF YOU ENTERED KINDERGARTEN.

WE DIDN'T HAVE C-D PLAYERS, WALKMANS, LASERS, CELLULAR  
TELEPHONES, AND FAX MACHINES. COMPUTERS IN CLASSROOMS AND  
COMPUTERS TALKING TO EACH OTHER. VCRs IN MOST HOMES, SATELLITE  
DISHES, FM RADIOS IN MOST CARS, BANK CASH MACHINES AND CREDIT CARD  
PHONE CALLS.



TIMES CHANGE AND SO WILL YOU.

AND YOU WILL FIND THAT IT IS A STRUGGLE TO OPEN YOUR WORLD TO BOTH WORK IN THE LABORATORY AND PLAY IN THE PARKS; TO POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND POETRY; TO GROCERY SHOPPING AND TRIPS TO THE MUSEUM; TO FIND TIME FOR NEWSWEEK AND THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

BUT YOUR EDUCATION HERE HAS GIVEN YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO JUST THAT.

IF YOU SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY, YOU WILL PROVIDE US WITH IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE THAT OUR HYPOTHESIS ABOUT THIS ACADEMY WAS A CORRECT ONE.

NOW, GO EXPAND YOUR WORLD, AND MAKE IT A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL OF US.

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AS WE ASSEMBLE HERE TODAY, WE CAN'T HELP BUT VIEW THIS GRADUATION IN TERMS OF ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO OUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND RELATIONSHIPS TO THIS VERY SPECIAL INSTITUTION. EACH IN HIS OWN WAY SHARES PRIDE IN THE MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAT HAVE BROUGHT US TO THIS EXCITING MOMENT.

TODAY WE ARE HERE TO PERFORM GRADUATION CEREMONIES FOR OUR FIRST CLASS OF APPRENTICE INVESTIGATORS. YOU HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO AS THE PIONEERS OF IJSA. NO CLASS IN THE FUTURE CAN EXPERIENCE THE UNIQUENESS OF YOUR PAST THREE YEARS.

BUT, ALONG WITH THAT SPECIAL STATUS, GOES SOME VERY SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES. IT IS YOUR CLASS THAT WILL BE THE FIRST REQUIRED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE IJSA EXPERIENCE HAS PRODUCED THE VERY BEST IN INTELLECTUAL AND EMOTIONALLY MATURE YOUNG ADULTS. MUCH OF THAT JUDGMENT WILL BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF OUR GRADUATES' SUCCESS. YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT ILLINOIS' INVESTMENT HAS PRODUCED A MOST INTELLIGENT AND CARING INDIVIDUAL. LET ME SHARE A VERY RELEVANT QUOTATION FROM THE BOOK ENTITLED "IN SEARCH OF EXCELLENCE", "INTEGRITY WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE IS WEAK AND USELESS, AND KNOWLEDGE

WITHOUT INTEGRITY IS DANGEROUS AND DREADFUL". THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES IS VERY PROUD OF YOU AND CONGRATULATES YOU ON YOUR SUCCESS. WE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE LEARNED THE IMPORTANCE OF BOTH OF THESE QUALITIES DURING YOUR 3 YEARS AT IMSA.

HOWEVER, LET US ALWAYS BE MINDFUL OF THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN OF THEMSELVES, SO THAT YOU GRADUATES HAVE RECEIVED THE VERY BEST. THE IMSA FAMILY HAS STRIVED TO BE TEACHER, PARENT AND FRIEND. THEREFORE, I WANT TO GIVE A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF OUR DEDICATED STAFF, FACILITY, ADMINISTRATION AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES. IN PARTICULAR, I WANT TO EXTEND MY PERSONAL THANKS AND CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. STEPHANIE MARSHALL FOR HER EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND UNSELFISH COMMITMENT TOWARD MAKING IMSA THE INSTITUTION THAT WE ALL ENVISIONED. I AM PROUD TO HAVE SERVED WITH YOU AS YOUR BOARD PRESIDENT DURING THIS FAST PERIOD. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR DEDICATION TO THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, A FIELD THAT REQUIRES THE VERY BEST, FOR ITS RESULTS WILL DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

NOW I WOULD LIKE TO ASK MRS. SHELIA GRIFFIN, AN EXECUTIVE WITH MOTOROLA, INC., TO JOIN ME ON THE STAGE FOR A SPECIAL PRESENTATION. MRS. GRIFFIN, WHO IS ONE OF THE BOARD MEMBERS WHO REPRESENTS THE PRIVATE INDUSTRY SECTOR, ALONG WITH DR. LEDERMAN, MYSELF, AND JACK MCELACHERN, AN EXECUTIVE WITH WAYNE

CIRCUITS, WHO COULD NOT BE WITH US TODAY, ARE CONSIDERED FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS. IN OTHER WORDS, WE HAVE BEEN THRU IT ALL WITH THIS GRADUATION CLASS.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SPECIAL MOMENT IS BECAUSE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES COULD CONSIDER NO FINER WAY TO DEDICATE THIS INSTITUTION THAN AT ITS FIRST GRADUATION CEREMONY. WE STAND WITNESS TODAY THAT THE CITIZENS OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS VALUES ITS MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE . . . . THE HUMAN MIND. THEREFORE, ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, IT IS OUR HONOR TO DEDICATE THE ILLINOIS MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE ACADEMY TO THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS. HOWEVER, IN SO DOING WE WISH TO PAY SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO TWO INDIVIDUALS WHO MADE THIS INSTITUTION A REALITY.

A PHYSICIST, DR. LEON LEDERMAN, A GOVERNOR, MR. JAMES R. THOMPSON, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES WOULD LIKE TO DEDICATE THIS ACADEMY IN YOUR HONOR. THE PLAQUE THAT WILL BE PERMANENTLY PLACED AT THE ENTRANCE TO IMSA WILL READ AS FOLLOWS: MRS. GRIFFIN WILL READ THE DEDICATION TO THE GOVERNOR AND DR. MARSHALL WILL READ THE DEDICATION TO DR. LEDERMAN.

UNDERNEATH BOTH OF THE DEDICATIONS WILL BE THE FOLLOWING INSCRIPTION - - - -

"SCIENCE IS AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH IN MANKIND'S ABILITY TO  
UNDERSTAND THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE, AND IT IS THAT FAITH THAT  
LED TO THE CREATION OF THE ILLINOIS MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE  
ACADEMY. IN THAT SPIRIT--WITH THAT FAITH--THE ACADEMY BOARD  
OF TRUSTEES DEDICATE THE ILLINOIS MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE  
ACADEMY TO THE PEOPLE OF ILLINOIS IN HONOR OF DR. LEON M.  
LEDERMAN AND GOVERNOR JAMES R. THOMPSON, VISIONARY LEADERS  
WHO WILL HELP KEEP THE PROMISE OF THE FUTURE."

WON'T YOU ALL JOIN WITH ME IN THANKING DR. LEDERMAN AND THE GOVERNOR  
FOR THEIR GIFTS TO ILLINOIS.