

Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy

GRADUATION - JUNE 3, 1995

# ACCEPTANCE OF THE CLASS OF 1995

by  
Stephanie Pace Marshall, Ph.D.

Thank you, and good morning.

I want to add my words of welcome to those of Mr. Pearson, and say how appreciative we all are to see so many of you here today to honor the Class of 1995.

Like the six classes before it, the Class of 1995, has helped to shape the Academy's history.

In 1992, when this class enrolled as sophomores, we were implementing the Academy's second strategic plan.

Key initiatives focused on developing integrative curriculum, establishing standards of significant learning, piloting alternative forms of assessing student

achievement, and building partnerships and collaborations throughout Illinois.

Members of the Class of 1995, participated in and greatly informed these innovations, and together we took major steps forward in our efforts to develop programs and strategies that foster interconnections and integrative ways of knowing, and that serve other students and teachers across our state.

This senior class also benefitted greatly from new and expanded resources and programs made possible by increased state and private-sector support—resources such as the Digital Authoring and Training Laboratory, the Integrated Science Laboratory, the Foreign Language Laboratory, and the Grainger Inventors' Workshop.

Members of the Class of 1995, have distinguished themselves in many ways—with numerous academic awards, only some of which Mr. Pearson cited, with admission to the finest schools in Illinois and the nation, and with literally millions of dollars worth of scholarships. It might interest you to know that over 38% of the students will be attending Illinois Colleges or Universities, with over 1/3

attending the University of Illinois, the University of Chicago and North Western University.

But just as important, this class has demonstrated the ethical leadership and the perseverance of character that we believe will have profound impact on the quality of life for others in our world.

Their academic and intellectual achievements have been impressive, but equally as important these seniors contributed more than **16,000** hours of **community service** to the citizens of Illinois — by serving as volunteers in hospitals, senior citizen and child-care facilities, schools, libraries, and museums—and four members of the class contributed in excess of 200 hours each.

Every class distinguishes itself in some way. Mr. Pearson cited the academic achievements of our seniors—there were many first and second place, recognitions, and we are very proud of these achievements. But there are other accomplishments of the class of 1995 equally worthy of distinction. These young people:

- Provided leadership to the student body, to raise and donate \$5,000. to several charitable organizations in the Chicagoland area.
- Participated in the World Vision Fight against World Hunger.
- Donated 67 units of blood for Heartland Blood Centers.
- Sponsored a senior citizen dance, called Young at Heart, which brought more than 50 area senior citizens together with one hundred students to dance and socialize on a Spring Saturday evening.

AND

- They submitted a proposal to the Board of Trustees and received approval, to have an official Student Liaison to the Academy's Board of Trustees, for the first time. Although they won't be a part of this, they were it's architects.

As their accomplishments indicate, the students in the Class of 1995, are enormously talented and capable young people; but they also are caring and thoughtful human

beings; respectful of each other and this special place we call IMSA.

Like their predecessors, they too have been pioneers, helping to shape the commitments, spirit and ethos of the Academy, and helping to advance our institution's leadership role in American education.

Carl Sagan, who is a member of the Academy's National Advisory Board, has called IMSA a gift from the people of Illinois to the human future.

But these special young people also have given us a gift—a gift of their youthful energy, enthusiasm, dedication, commitment, seriousness of purpose, and significant accomplishments—and we all have been enriched by having shared a part of their lives.

Members of the Class of 1995 have left a strong and vibrant legacy for the students who will follow in the years ahead, and for that we are all grateful.

As our newest graduates, we hope you feel we have also given you a part of us, and that, in the end, you have received much more than a diploma.

We hope you feel that your capacity for problem-finding and solving, and creativity has been nurtured;

- That your ability to see and create connections within and among mathematics, science, the arts and the humanities has been enhanced;

- That your leadership potential and ethical perspective have been developed and focused;

and

- That your appreciation for the interconnectedness of the natural world or which we are all a part, has been increased.

And, we hope you have grown to appreciate more than ever, your individual and collective responsibility to give back and to become stewards of the world's resources.

For this class, the words of one of my favorite poems seems most appropriate:

*Isn't it strange that princes and Kings*

*and clowns that caper in sawdust rings*

*And common people like you and me*

*Are builders for eternity*

*Each is given a bag of tools,*

*A block of stone, a book of rules And each must make  
'ere*

*Life is flown*

*A stumbling block or a stepping stone.*

I can assure you that this class is stepping proudly into the future

On behalf of Mr. Pearson, and the Board of Trustees, and with the gratitude of the entire Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy staff, your families and friends who are here today, and our shareholders throughout the State of Illinois; I accept the members of the Class of 1995, and bestow upon them the diploma and commencement medallion of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy.

Congratulations, and Godspeed.