

DRAFT

Commencement of the Class of 1993
Introduction of Dr. Leon Lederman
By James D. Pearson
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Good Morning. For those of you who do not know me, my name is Jim Pearson and I have the privilege of serving as president of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy board of trustees. On behalf of the entire board, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our seniors, their families and friends, and IMSA faculty and staff. This is not only a special day for our graduates ... it also is a special day for those who have played a significant role in helping them achieve their educational and personal goals.

The 1992-93 school year has been a remarkable one for the Academy. Let me recount a few of the highlights at this time. This year Dr. Edward Teller, one of the most celebrated physicists of this century, gave the second annual James R. Thompson Leadership Lecture. However, what was unique this year is that Dr. Teller visited the campus for two weeks to present a series of other lectures to students, staff and external guests. IMSA also held the second annual Richard L. Horwitz Lecture on Ethics. This year the lecture was given by Dr. Richard Garwin, an IBM fellow at the Thomas J. Watson Research Center in New York.

In the area of institutional advancement, IMSA was awarded a \$750,000 challenge grant from the Harris Family Foundation of Northbrook. This is the Academy's largest private gift to date and will support the national Center for Problem-Based Learning.

IMSA also expanded its service to teachers and students throughout Illinois this year. For example, an additional 248 teachers joined the IMPACT II network as recipients of the latest adaptor and disseminator teaching grants. Currently 785 teachers are members of the IMPACT II network.

Shortly, IMSA will welcome 180 Illinois students to its Summer 'ADVentures in Mathematics, Science and Technology program. This year, Summer 'ADVentures also will feature a teacher's workshop.

Finally, members of the IMSA student body, including many from the Class of 1993, achieved numerous academic honors this year including first place in the Westinghouse Talent Search, Illinois Science Olympiad and Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics State Math Contest and impressive accomplishments in other subjects as well.

In addition, many of our seniors participated in IMSA's mentorship program, working on site with leading scientists and researchers in corporations, educational institutions and laboratories in the Chicagoland area. Some of those seniors presented their research at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research at the University of Utah in March. For the second year in a row, IMSA was the only high school invited to participate in the conference.

Yes, it has been a remarkable year, and today we are here to celebrate a very special occasion – the commencement of the Academy's 5th graduating class. On behalf of the board of trustees, I want to congratulate and thank these fine young men and women for their many contributions to the IMSA community. I'm sure we'll be hearing great things about you in the years ahead!

At this time, it is my honor to introduce our commencement speaker for this special occasion. As many of you may already know, Dr. Leon Lederman played an important role in the establishment of the Academy. He and Governor James Thompson are often referred to as IMSA's "founding fathers." Currently, Dr. Lederman serves as vice president of the IMSA board of trustees and a director of the IMSA Fund for Advancement of Education.

He is director emeritus of Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory and the Pritzker Professor of Science at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago where he teaches introductory physics. In addition, he also serves as Science Advisor to Governor Jim Edgar.

Dr. Lederman graduated from the City College of New York in 1943 with a major in chemistry and a minor in physics. He then entered the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1946, before receiving his Ph.D. in physics in 1951 from Columbia University.

Dr. Lederman spent the next 28 years at Columbia, directing the Nevis Laboratory from 1961 to 1978 and conducting research at various other labs including Brookhaven in Long Island, New York, Lawrence Berkeley Lab in California and Fermilab in Batavia. He became Director of Fermilab in 1979.

Ten years later, he left Fermilab to become Professor of Physics at the University of Chicago. In 1992, Dr. Lederman served a one year term as chairman of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and joined the faculty of IIT that fall. In addition, he serves as co-chairman of the board of trustees for the Teachers' Academy of Mathematics and Science in Chicago.

During his career, Dr. Lederman has achieved many great things... probably the most memorable being the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1988. He also received the 1982 Wolf Prize in Physics and 30 other awards and honorary degrees. In addition, he has authored 200 papers on diverse aspects of high energy particle physics including the discovery of two neutrino which led to the Nobel Prize.

His most recent book, The God Particle: If the Universe is the Answer. What is the Question?, is now available in bookstores nationwide and just last month, Dr. Lederman visited IMSA's campus for a book-signing.

Dr. Lederman has been the guest speaker at numerous conferences and workshops throughout Illinois, the nation and world. He is a champion of scientific inquiry, science education, and scientific literacy for the general public.

A plaque dedicated to IMSA's founding fathers, Governor Thompson and Dr. Lederman, hangs in the front lobby of the Academy as a reminder of their leadership at a time when IMSA's future was uncertain. A portion of the plaque reads as follows:

As a physicist, researcher, university professor and laboratory administrator, Leon Lederman has influenced the role of science in American life. At Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, he became a leader in launching programs to encourage young people to pursue their scientific interests. His deep concern for the quality of science and mathematics education in Illinois, and his intense commitment to motivate students to pursue careers in science, led him to propose the concept of a unique high school for Illinois--a school that would inspire and challenge students of exceptional talent.

Your three years at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy were possible in large part, because of his leadership. We are truly fortunate to have such an accomplished research scientist as well as friend of the Academy as our commencement speaker this morning. Please join me in welcoming Nobel Laureate Dr. Leon Lederman.