

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

44th Annual Convocation and Investiture of Student Laureates

Saturday, the 17th of November
Two thousand eighteen

Hall of Representatives
Old State Capitol Historic Site
Springfield

*Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow.
The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.*

Abraham Lincoln

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

The Old State Capitol Historic Site

Where Lincoln debated slavery's future, freedom's meaning and America's destiny

When Abraham Lincoln and eight of his fellow state legislators (known as the Long Nine) were successful in their efforts to move the capital city from Vandalia to Springfield, a new statehouse was needed. On July 4, 1837, workers laid the cornerstone for this building. Designed by Springfield architect John Rague in Greek Revival style, the first rooms opened for use in 1839. When the Illinois House of Representatives convened in this room for the first time in December 1840, Abraham Lincoln took his seat for his fourth and final term as a legislator. Lincoln's desk and the portrait of Washington are the only two items present today which are original to the room.

As a lawyer, Lincoln argued many cases in this building before the Illinois Supreme Court. He launched his 1858 Senate campaign against Stephen A. Douglas in this room, warning the nation of the dangers of a 'house divided against itself.' And two years later, he prepared to assume the duties of President in the second-floor governor's office and adjoining reception room.

Following his death, Lincoln's body was brought here to the Hall of Representatives in the spring of 1865 to lie in state as thousands of grief-stricken mourners streamed past the open coffin.

In 1876, state government offices moved to a new capitol building, several blocks away, and this building was extensively remodeled for use as the county courthouse.

Admirers of Abraham Lincoln launched an effort to return this noble building to its original appearance. Reconstruction began in 1966 when the building was completely dismantled, and the exterior stones were carefully removed, numbered and stored at the state fairgrounds until the walls could be meticulously rebuilt.

Following a three-year collaboration of historians and architects to re-create the Illinois Statehouse of Abraham Lincoln's time, the Old State Capitol Historic Site was rededicated November 15, 1969. Shortly thereafter, Illinois' Sixth Constitutional Convention met in this room, drafting our state's current constitution, the Constitution of 1970.

And on a cold winter day in 2007 -- just prior to Lincoln's birthday -- another proud Illinoisan, U.S. Senator Barack Obama, announced his own candidacy for President on the steps of this building, '*where Lincoln once called on a divided house to stand together,*' he said, '*where common hopes and common dreams still live.*'

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Sangamon Woodwind Consort

Cindy Garretson
Flute

Krista Steller
Oboe

Cathy McGuire
Bassoon

Call to Order

Eric Trimble
Regent

Invocation

The Honorable Ron Spears
Vice Chancellor

Opening of the Convocation

Stephanie Pace Marshall, PhD
Chancellor

Speaking on behalf of the Student Laureates

Samantha Ann Boomgarden
Eastern Illinois University

Alan J. Sandural
University of Illinois at Chicago

Presentation of the Class of 2018 Student Laureates

Joy Boruff, Trustee
Harold Oakley, Trustee

Remarks

Benediction

Dr. Susan J. Koch
Chancellor of the University of Illinois Springfield

The Abraham Lincoln Civic Engagement Award

The monetary awards presented to the Student Laureates are made possible through the generous support of the Malott Family Foundation and from the contributions to the Order of Lincoln ceremonies held earlier this year. Support from the Malott Family Foundation is in memory of Elizabeth Hubert Malott. Ibbey Malott was an extraordinary woman who combined keen insight, limitless energy and elegance. Her leadership as a Regent of the Academy greatly influenced and furthered its mission.



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The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Student Laureates

Student Laureate	Institution	Academic Trustee
Adam Michael Kern Gronewold	Augustana College	Steven C. Bahls
Hernan Ramirez	Aurora University	Rebecca Sherrick
Ismail Ahmad	Benedictine University	Charles Gregory
Austin Ives	Blackburn College	Jennifer Braaten
Malini Ann Wijesinghe	Bradley University	Gary Roberts
Isis Martin	Chicago State University	Zaldwaynaka 'Z' Scott
Anna Leone Friedrich	Concordia University Chicago	Daniel L. Gard
Alexandra Bailey Goodman	DePaul University	A. Gabriel Esteban
Natalie Sanchez	Dominican University	Donna M. Carroll
Samantha Ann Boomgarden	Eastern Illinois University	David Glassman
Guillermo Rodriguez	East-West University	M. Wasiulla Khan
Brenda Guan	Elmhurst College	Troy VanAken
William Carter Compton	Eureka College	Jamel Santa Cruze Wright
Athanasios Kolovos	Governors State University	Elaine P. Maimon
Emily Ann Gaffner	Greenville College	Ivan Filby
Charles Kevin Monge	Illinois College	Barbara A. Edwards Farley
Misha B. Shah	Illinois Institute of Technology	Alan W. Cramb
Morgan M. Grunloh	Illinois State University	Larry H. Dietz
Abigail Elizabeth Kauerauf	Illinois Wesleyan University	Eric R. Jensen
Megan Ryan Curran	Judson University	Gene C. Crume, Jr.
Samantha Isabelle Burgess	Knox College	Teresa L. Amott
Ayesha Quraishi	Lake Forest College	Stephen D. Schutt
Jessica A. Kelliher	Lewis University	David Livingston
Brighton J. Robbins	Lincoln College	David H. Gerlach
Ali Z. Piracha	Loyola University Chicago	Jo Ann Rooney
Faythe Reyhan Newberry	MacMurray College	Mark Tierno
Andrew Michael Wagner	McKendree University	James M. Dennis
Luke David Azzarelli	Millikin University	Patrick E. White

Academic Tru

Timothy L. Killeen
University of Illinois

J. Kevin Dorsey (Interim)
Southern Illinois University

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Student Laureates

Student Laureate	Institution	Academic Trustee
Sobhi Gheath Kazmouz	Monmouth College	Clarence Wyatt
Maria Elena Cardenas	National Louis University	Nivine Megahed
Veronica A. Ramming	North Central College	Troy D. Hammond
Ricardo M. Delgado	North Park University	David L. Parkyn
Ashlei N. Ross	Northeastern Illinois University	Gloria J. Gibson
I Younan An	Northern Illinois University	Lisa Freeman
Lorna Teresa Sanchez McCann	Northwestern University	Morton O. Schapiro
Thomas L. Lambrecht	Olivet Nazarene University	John C. Bowling
Jessica Marie Barker	Principia College	Jolanda Westerhof
Cooper Harrison	Quincy University	Phillip Conover
Pooja J. Shah	Robert Morris University	Mablene Krueger
Hanqing Wang	Rockford University	Eric Fulcomer
Dylan Myckel Warren	Roosevelt University	Ali Malekzadeh
Susannah Helen Marevka	Saint Xavier University	Laurie M. Joyner
Jesus Hilario Reyes	School of the Art Institute of Chicago	Elissa Tenny
Andrea Taylor Storey	Southern Illinois University Carbondale	
Austin Cole Tuttle	Southern Illinois University Edwardsville	Randall Pembroke
Danielle Schmidt	The University of Chicago	Robert J. Zimmer
Mallory J. Boyce	Trinity Christian College	Kurt D. Dykstra
Nathan M. Schlagel	Trinity International University	David S. Dockery
Alan J. Sadural	University of Illinois at Chicago	Michael D. Amiridis
Hailey Hollinshead	University of Illinois Springfield	Susan J. Koch
Sarah Marie Brennan	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	Robert J. Jones
Roberto E. Santillan	University of St. Francis	Arvid C. Johnson
Alivia Ann Jakubowski	VanderCook College of Music	Roseanne Rosenthal
Nicole L. Walker	Western Illinois University	Jack Thomas
Nicole Marie Miller	Wheaton College	Philip G. Ryken
Zana Layne Danner	Carl Sandburg College	Seamus Reilly

stees at Large

Karen Hunter Anderson
Illinois Community College Board

Al Bowman
Illinois Board of Higher Education

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

History of the Academy

The Lincoln Academy was established by proclamation of the Governor of Illinois in 1964, shortly after the New York World's Fair. During the World's Fair a reception was given for some of our state's most celebrated sons and daughters which impressed Governor Otto Kerner and gave birth to a program to recognize distinguished Illinoisans annually through the establishment of the Order of Lincoln.

The first Convocation and Investiture of Laureates was held on Lincoln's birthday, February 12, 1965 at the Chicago Historical Society and convocations have been held in locations across the state every year since then. During the Lincoln Bicentennial in 2009, a special Bicentennial Edition of the Order of Lincoln was established, and thirty distinguished Lincoln scholars, collectors, artists, and curators from around the world were honored.

In 1992, Governor Jim Edgar, President of the Lincoln Academy, initiated the creation of a Hall of Fame of Historic Illinoisans whose achievements and contributions were made prior to the establishment of the Lincoln Academy in 1964. Fifty Hall of Fame Honorees were selected. In 2018, in recognition of the Bicentennial of Illinois, and with the approval of the Regents, Stephanie Pace Marshall, PhD, Chancellor of the Lincoln Academy, re-constituted the Hall of Fame. Trustee Alan Lowe, President of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, served as Chair. Five new members of the Lincoln Academy's Hall of Fame were selected by Academy Trustees in November 2018.

The mission of the Lincoln Academy was expanded in 1975 by the Student Laureate Program, in which an outstanding senior from each of the four-year degree-granting colleges and universities in Illinois and one student representing our state's community colleges are honored. **Thus, the Lincoln Academy honors the Great Citizens of Today and Celebrates the Great Citizens of Tomorrow -- knowing that now, as always, our state and nation need what Vachel Lindsay called 'Lincoln-hearted' men and women.**

Organization of the Academy

The Lincoln Academy is a nonpartisan organization governed by a Board of Regents and a membership of General Trustees. Illinois' Governor is the President of the Academy and the Board of Regents elects a Chancellor who serves as Chief Executive Officer. The General Trustees are appointed by the Governor or elected by the Academy. Ten Rectors serve as ex officio trustees and assist in identifying potential nominees for the Order of Lincoln. The Academic Trustees are the chief executive officers of all four-year colleges and universities in Illinois and three members at large. At the discretion of the Regents, a former Governor may be elected a Regent for Life, and a former Member Regent, General Trustee, or Rector who has served in office for ten years or more may be elected an Emeritus Member, in recognition of distinguished service to the Academy.

Former Chancellors of the Academy

The Hon. Michael Butler, Chicago (1965-1969)

Robert Bone, Bloomington (1969 - 1971)

William K. Alderfor, Chicago (1971 - 1975)

Thomas R. Mulroy, Chicago (1975 - 1979)

Marshall Burman, Chicago, (1979 - 1985)

John Trutter, Chicago (1985 - 2001)

The Hon. John B. Simon, Chicago (2001-2010)

Thomas S. Johnson (2010 – 2015)

William Bennett (2015 – 2016)

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

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Dr. Stephanie Pace Marshall, Chancellor*
The Honorable Ron Spears, Vice Chancellor*
Ethel Holladay, Secretary*

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The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Thank you to these donors whose financial support helped make today's ceremonies possible.

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Richard 'Doc' & Ethel Holladay

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The Hon. Ron Spears

Student Laureate Alumni Volunteers

Monica Chen – 2015 University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

Kristen Gardner – 2017 Chicago State University

Kisha Johnson – 2017 East-West University

Courtney Kalous – 2016 Trinity Christian College

Sherry Maschmeyer – 2015 Aurora University

Shannon Young – 2015 MacMurray College

Special Thanks

Abraham Lincoln Association

Marcia Franklin

Francie Staggs

Justin Blandford

Sue Ganey

Phyllis Steinhour

Veronica Brown

Troy Gilmore

Nicky Stratton

Jennifer Caldwell

Travis Hogan

Dr. Alan Stutz

Margo Carlen

Alicia Jordan

Sarah Croft

Fritz Klein

Abraham Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address

President Abraham Lincoln gave his historical Gettysburg address on November 19, 1863, to dedicate a national cemetery on the battlefield in Pennsylvania. The Battle of Gettysburg, fought over three days, saw a total of over 51,000 Confederate and Union troops killed, captured, wounded, or missing in action.

In a four-year span of time (1861-1865), the American Civil War left a mind-numbing 700,000 plus dead soldiers. In comparison, WWII lost 420,000 American soldiers.

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

LEGACY VOICES: LETTERS TO THE NEXT GENERATION

During this, Illinois' Bicentennial year, it is fitting that the Lincoln Academy inaugurated a new annual tradition focused on connecting our distinguished Lincoln Laureates with our next generation leaders — our Student Laureates.

This past May, in Rockford, eight exceptional Illinoisans were honored with the Lincoln Academy's Order of Lincoln, Illinois' highest honor presented by the Governor. Laureates were invited to write a letter to the Student Laureates who would receive the Lincoln Medal in the fall, sharing their story and offering insights of 'lessons learned'. Each said "yes"; and LEGACY VOICES: LETTERS TO THE NEXT GENERATION was inaugurated.

It is not often that we have the opportunity to speak directly to our next generation leaders, those who are highly motivated to use their lives well and contribute to their communities, their nation and this time. These young people seek role models and mentors of integrity - leaders whose moral compass points True North and who live and lead in 'the Spirit of Abraham Lincoln'. Our 2018 Laureates are such leaders. Their work and wisdom come to life in the letters that follow — letters written directly to our Student Laureates of 2018 - letters of inspiration, leadership, hope and faith in the future and in them.

Author Emily Dickinson said: "... A letter always seemed to me like immortality"

The Lincoln Academy is sincerely grateful to our Laureates of 2018 for inaugurating LEGACY VOICES: LETTERS TO THE NEXT GENERATION.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Pace Marshall". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Stephanie Pace Marshall, Ph.D
Chancellor, The Lincoln Academy of Illinois Lincoln Laureate, 2005

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Dear Student Laureate Class of 2018:

Congratulations on this amazing honor! What a special award - created to recognize the most noteworthy seniors which are chosen as Student Laureates of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois to represent each of the participating Illinois colleges and universities. Only one student is chosen from each of the state's colleges. That's a HUGE achievement.

Lincoln was described as being "a man of profound feeling, just and firm principles, and incorruptible integrity," and embodies the principals and values that I aim for in my personal and professional life. These qualities are what you are being recognized for with this honor.

I was told many years ago that, "luck is when opportunity meets preparation" and that there is no replacement for genuine hard work. Framed on the wall of the office of someone I admire very much is a sign that reads, "stay humble and be kind". These are just simple words, but to me they are a guidebook for success. As my mentor, Quincy Jones told me, "your music is only as good as the person you are inside."

The next chapter in your lives as you graduate is very exciting and is full of opportunity and promise. Use the skills and attributes that enabled you to receive this special award as you move forward in your lives and goals.

Keep happy, keep healthy and keep creating!

With respect,

Emily Bear
Lincoln Laureate, 2018

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Dear Student Laureate Class of 2018:

It is a joy and a sincere honor to congratulate you on your selection as a Student Laureate of the Lincoln Academy, and to have the opportunity to share some thoughts with you. Based on the contributions you have already made and the recognitions you have already received, you have an amazing future ahead of you. I wish you success in all your endeavors, as you seek to lead in the spirit Abraham Lincoln.

It may come as a surprise that despite my size, I don't particularly like or want to be noticed! I don't relish standing before a crowd or public speaking. What I do like to do, especially now, is to recognize and celebrate those who are selflessly seeking to make a difference in the lives of others and to make the world a better place for everyone.

I am very proud to be a member of the Pro Football Hall of fame; and I am deeply honored to be a new Laureate of the Lincoln Academy. As such, you and I are now connected and share a bond that calls us to work toward the "Betterment of Humanity". I don't know about you, but that's a pretty high bar and one I will continue to strive toward reaching every day.

The important truth I have come to understand is that living and leading in the context of bettering humanity doesn't take doing something big and splashy; all it takes is an authentic commitment to serve others; to listen; to notice when someone needs support; to pay attention; and to simply do what needs to be done, quietly and privately.

One of the initiatives of the Butkus Foundation is to "Play Clean". Our foundation is dedicated to keeping kids from using steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs to improve their play. It's a long uphill battle but I keep working at it one day at a time - head down and determined to spread the word.

I have always believed that all we need to make the lives of others and the world better, is already within us; it is in our hearts.

So play clean, play hard, play fair, and always tell the truth to others and yourself.

My sincere best wishes for every future success,

Dick Butkus
Lincoln Laureate, 2018

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Dear Student Laureate Class of 2018,

Congratulations on your recognition as a Student Laureate. I am honored to share a part of my story and some “life lessons” learned along the way.

While in elementary school my parents bought an Apple II computer. Learning programming languages at this age allowed me to spend most weekends with my computer... imagining, exploring, and experimenting success and failure.

In 1993 I moved into the dorms of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. Now, I had my OWN computer, modem, and access to Netscape. I stayed up late and became addicted to technology and what might be possible.

Computer science at the University of Illinois was my next chapter; there I was surrounded by those with similar passions and insatiable curiosity to create. Soon I was asked to join the start-up team of PayPal with Elon Musk, Max Levchin, and Peter Thiel. I suspended my U of I studies and headed to Silicon Valley. We grew PayPal, took it public and survived the DotCom crash of 2000.

Then I met Chad Hurley who became my partner in creating YouTube. We met in a coffee shop in Palo Alto almost every day and finally decided on the idea of streaming videos – practically nonexistent and viewed as “highly impractical” We grew faster than any company at the time; scaling was only possible by maxing out my credit cards and burning through savings. Once we secured venture capital funding, we hired staff and worked around the clock, seven days a week. We faced countless challenges, but we survived, thrived, and... the rest is history!

Although how you pursue your passions and dreams will be unique, the lessons I learned are universal.

1. Luck makes a big difference. I was very lucky; and now recognize that luck is a gift we don't necessarily earn. All it does is gets us to the door.
2. Walking through that door requires courage, commitment, and perseverance. Many great ideas never take off because the first step into the unknown was never taken; so, **don't give up after the first failure**, or quit after the first strike. The parade of successful entrepreneurs will continue and the common thread will be perseverance.
3. As our next generation of leaders, the first step when you see a solution to a problem; **swing that bat** enough times and you will hit a homerun; and when you do, it will be because you stayed in the game and didn't give up.
4. **Be grateful and be generous.** Remember where you came from and give back. Everyone needs the shoulders of others to stand on; offer yours.

I wish you well in all your endeavors as you continue to lead ‘in the spirit of Abraham Lincoln’.

Steven Shih Chen
Lincoln Laureate, 2018

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Dear Student Laureate Class of 2018,

Congratulations on your receipt of the Lincoln Medal and your designation as a Student Laureate of the Lincoln Academy. It is an honor to recognize your milestone achievement and to share some thoughts with you.

I have been privileged to be President of Loyola University of Chicago for 14 years and several other academic institutions before that. Serving the needs of students through higher education has been and remains my life's work, so it's natural for me to center my thoughts to you around the value and gift of higher education; not only to each of us, but to our nation and society at large.

I hope the ideas I share encourage you to continue to learn and develop your minds well, so others will benefit from the contributions you make because of what you have gained from your educational experience.

In the United States, the previous century of higher education was regarded as an incredible time of expansion of choice and diversity of options for talented young people. Major research universities, specialty institutions, community colleges and regional institutions were built; it was also a time of expansion of opportunity, starting with the G.I. Bill, Pell grants and scholarship opportunities created by foundations to help young people access higher education. There was also a clear recognition that our leaders and our democracy required well-educated citizens who could think critically and act wisely. It was an unprecedented time of expansion of access and increasing excellence.

However, at the turn of the century there was a turn, and we begin to view higher education as a private, rather than a common good. Today's assault on truth in the public arena, the politicization of the media, and the weakening of our intolerance of dishonesty are dangerous developments that threaten the principles of honesty, respect for the law and our duty to promote the common good over personal or tribal gain. These are the very principles for which Abraham Lincoln stood.

As leaders of our next generation, I congratulate you on what you have already achieved and contributed to your universities, your communities and your families. I ask you to remain mindful of the needs of our democracy and to pledge to protect our Democratic experiment which requires constant diligence and commitment.

My prayer is that your life will be blessed with countless opportunities to serve in accordance with your gifts and that your leadership will be a manifestation of the legacy of arguably our greatest president, Abraham Lincoln.

The Reverend Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.
Lincoln Laureate, 2018

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Dear Student Laureate Class of 2018,

First, I want to congratulate you on your honor and recognition as a Student Laureate of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois.

I felt both humbled and grateful to be recognized as a Laureate of the Academy and I'm sure you do as well. We are now forever connected, not only to one another, but also to the remarkable leadership legacy of Abraham Lincoln.

I've always been proud to be born in the Land of Lincoln, and it's unarguable "course of study" for Abraham Lincoln as one of the most significant presidents in the United States. I am equally grateful to be from the state that gave us the first black president, President Barack Obama, who is to me and to many in this country and around the world, a modern-day hero.

However, it is not just great Presidents that come from Illinois; although many famous and accomplished people have called Illinois home, equally important are the countless "not so famous" people who are doing great things every day. My husband, George Lucas and his friend Steven Spielberg, probably would not have made the great Indiana Jones movie, had it not been for Karen Allen and Harrison Ford, both born in Illinois.

I believe Illinois' great truths are our tremendous values and work ethic and these became the roots of my life and work that my late mother instilled in me from a very early age. As a child, she would always say to me: "Melody, you can be or do anything". And although I couldn't imagine how my life would unfold, I believed her and have exceeded every expectation I ever had.

Equally as important, she said over and over again, "Be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all."

As the Next generation of leaders for Illinois, our nation and the world, I hope you hold these ideas and ideals foremost in your mind: the importance of deeply rooted values that guide and ground your life, the commitment to a strong work ethic that calls you to excellence ; and the promise that you will strive to embody the leadership legacy of Abraham Lincoln in everything you do and work hard to continue to earn the prestigious honor that has been given to you as a Student Laureate of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois.

With sincere best wishes,

Melody Hobson
Lincoln Laureate, 2018

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Dear Student Laureate Class of 2018,

Congratulations on your selection as an Order of Lincoln Student Laureate. You have obviously excelled in both your academic and leadership endeavors during your post high school academic experience... well done!!!

Please be encouraged to make this the beginning of your career of achievement and contributions to society. Abraham Lincoln made a lifelong commitment to advancing the cause of freedom and enhancing the lives of United States Citizens throughout his life. Along the way, Lincoln undertook numerous opportunities to enhance his own limited education while pursuing numerous business, public service, and political responsibilities. If you track his career, you will notice many failures along the way... not terminal failures... experiences where he learned from his mistakes and then continued on in his quest to contribute and make a positive difference.

I encourage you to learn from Lincoln's experiences and use them to guide your career pursuits... adventure daringly... undertake important opportunities... succeed as you can... accept failure as a learning experience... then move on to another challenge... just as Lincoln did throughout his very significant and important life in the history of the United States.

While the culmination of your career's worthy pursuits will be recognized long after I depart this glorious world, I am confident, if you continue to pursue excellence, learn from your mistakes, and dedicate your life to the betterment of mankind... you will not only look back on your life and say "well done"... but also your friends and family will recognize you as a person who made a positive difference... that is all one can ask!!!

Again, congratulations and best wishes as you launch the next steps in your career!!!

Edward L. McMillan
Lincoln Laureate, 2018

University of Illinois Trustee & Past Chair
Retired President & CEO Purina Mills, Inc.

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Dear Student Laureate Class of 2018,

Congratulations on your recognition as a Student Laureate of the Lincoln Academy. I am honored to write to you to share some of my work and offer some thoughts as you begin a most exciting chapter in your life and academic journey.

As you may know, as founding faculty director of the Kovler Diabetes Center at the University of Chicago, my life has been committed to the integration of diabetes patient care and research. Our mission has been to steadfastly pursue discoveries, both large and small that contribute to the prevention and treatment of diabetes related conditions.

Together with my team, I've had the good fortune to make several contributions to understanding insulin secretion, but the greatest impact has been in deepening knowledge and understanding of the genetics of certain rare kinds of diabetes. Our group has become global leaders in understanding specific gene mutations that cause diabetes, enabling us to help some patients actually stop taking insulin and sometimes even any drug at all. Enormous gains have been made, yet significant challenges remain- especially in the areas of research, prevention and cures which remain insufficient.

This year I have also been the President-Elect of the American Diabetes Association for Science and Medicine. To help the over 30 million people in the United States with diabetes, we will continue to work toward creating better healthcare policy and increase our efforts to reduce the cost of diabetes medicine in general and insulin in particular. Diabetes is economically and socially devastating in the United States and around the world, and it need not be. I feel privileged to be in this life-changing work which remains my passion. Perhaps one of you will become interested in this dynamic research field as well.

As you identify and pursue your life's work, I wish for you the blessings that have made my life so full:

1. Powerful work that challenges your talents and is passionately aligned with the difference you wish to make in the world.
2. Teachers, mentors and colleagues who generously guide and inspire you to keep striving for what might be possible.
3. Family and friends who fill your life with love and with joy.
4. A sense of "radical amazement" that enables you to never take your interactions with the world for granted; and
5. An insatiable desire to never stop learning.

I know you feel as honored as I do to now have your name connected to one of the greatest leaders in the history of our country.

Congratulations on your honor and sincere best wishes for the exciting journey that lies ahead.

Louis Philipson MD, PhD
Lincoln Laureate, 2018

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

Dear Student Laureate Class of 2018,

Congratulations on your selection as a student Laureate of the Lincoln Academy. This is a major recognition at your age and you should be very proud to have been chosen.

I thought about what I wanted to share with you and decided on two areas: my personal perspectives on our country and “lessons” that remain guiding principles for me.

Whether we were born or immigrated to the United States, our freedom defines us and we are most fortunate to live in this special nation, which despite its challenges, remains the beacon of freedom and hope for much of our world. Your generation will be called upon to defend and keep the light of liberty glowing. Our country, compared to most of the world, has achieved a very high standard of living. Despite our success, however, far too many still lead very challenging lives, deprived of even basic needs. It is up to us to ensure that everyone has what is needed for living a healthy and secure life.

1. During your life’s journey you will come to know exceptional people who will have a major impact on the person you become. Cherish them and form relationships with them.
2. It is very easy to criticize the decision of an individual or group. Please remember, difficult choices must often be made with confidential information that is not accessible to everyone. Therefore, be careful with your criticism until you have made sure you know all the facts.
3. Do not ignore or refuse to listen to the views and opinions of others. As you know, this is a growing and dangerous problem for our country. The best outcomes take place when all “sides” have been able to share their views in a civil way.
4. Your good ideas can turn into great ideas when input, suggestions, and modifications are received from others. Don’t be concerned who gets the credit. Be concerned about the best outcome for everyone.
5. Those of you who someday may be in management positions of profit-making organizations should never compromise the quality of its products or services in the pursuit of profit; never maximize profit at the expense of customers, employees, suppliers, or other partners. Share a decent % of the profit with “all” team members. Finally, make certain all team members are paid competitive market wages and fringes, everyone has safe and pleasant working conditions, and all are educated and properly trained for their respective positions within the organization.
6. Get involved and share a portion of your income or profit with those organizations that provide much needed services to those who are struggling. Being part of these organizations has given my life a real balance and I have worked alongside truly wonderful and outstanding people.

I wish you a fantastic life surrounded by family and friends as you seek what is to be your mission in this world. Remain cognizant of the challenges you will face as you strive to leave our planet a better place for generations to come.

Best wishes,
David Rydell
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