

Press release

Remembering Nobel laureate Leon Lederman

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Dr. Leon Lederman

in world history."

It has been 5 years since Dr. Leon Lederman's passing, and at a small gathering on the Southside of Chicago an eclectic group of students, faculty and friends regale each other with stories about the famous Nobel laureate.

Dr. Lederman received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1988, but the discussions are not centered around this accomplishment. Rather, they are remembering their friend, teacher and mentor who profoundly impacted their academic studies, professional careers, and personal lives.

"He was a gifted professor who enjoyed talking and being around students no matter their major," said Dr. Ken Abrams, Vice President of Cyber Security Services. "It wasn't always about physics either. We discussed a myriad of topics over coffee or at a bar. He led such an interesting and diverse life during an important, revolutionary period

Dr. Lederman grew up in New York and enlisted in the US Army during World War II. After completing his tour of duty, he enrolled at Columbia University receiving his Ph.D. in 1951. He later became a tenured professor at Columbia, but took an extended leave of absence to become director of the Fermilab.

"The son of Eastern European Jews, he took the Holocaust and his Army service during WWII very seriously," said Robert Brevette, Board member of Cyber Security Services and Founding Sponsor of the National Museum of the US Army. "We regularly spoke about the military, military history and the current geopolitical climate. Back in the 90's, I was serving in the Army ROTC program and attending Illinois Institute of Technology. Dr. Lederman was one of the most well-known and highly regarded physicists in the Fermilab community. He was also the most highly sought-after professor and advisor on campus regardless of major."

After retiring from Fermilab, Dr. Lederman taught at the University of Chicago and then the Illinois Institute of Technology as the Pritzker Professor of Science. During this time, he served as President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

"Unlike many physicists, he enjoyed teaching physics to non-physics majors. As you can imagine, I was delighted that he took an interest in a Computer Science student such as myself and in my IPRO project," said Robert. "IPRO was a novel concept at the time where it combined theory with practical application, rapid product development and a business plan. IPROs introduced undergraduates to advanced concepts traditionally reserved for graduate research students. Through our discussions, I learned that we had a lot in common. Like his parents, my mother was a foreigner from a third-world country. We both came from working-class families. We were extremely patriotic and volunteered to serve our country. And above all else, we valued education and had a passion to learn and discover new things."

Dr. Lederman discovered the existence of a new type of neutrino, which was dubbed the muon neutrino and confirmed that elementary particles are grouped in pairs - a cornerstone of the model that today explains nearly all of physics and earned him the Nobel Prize. While he received some of the highest national and international awards and honors given to scientists, he took immense pride in teaching and helping students.

"Due to his tutelage and in no small part his prodding of the powers to be, I had the opportunity to later work on flagship projects and conduct research funded by the Pritzker Institute, National Science Foundation and the IIT Research Institute," said Robert. "Dr. Lederman really opened my and many other students' eyes to opportunities that exist, regardless of your major, religion or ethnicity. I wasn't old enough to buy a beer, but I was working with some of the greatest minds in science. I co-authored papers published at international conferences with senior faculty members and renowned scientists. I owe that and so much more to Dr. Lederman."

Dr. Lederman wrote the popular book, *The God Particle*. In addition to the Nobel Peace Prize, he was awarded the National Medal of Science, Wolf Prize in Physics, Enrico Fermi Award, and received DePaul University's highest academic award, the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters.

"It saddens me to think of what my old friend and mentor would think and feel if he were alive today to see that there are so many in

this world...especially those at US universities...that support antisemitism and perpetrate crimes against humanity," said Ken.

"We can all learn something from Dr. Lederman," said Robert. "Regardless of our education or position in this world, we can serve the greater good through tolerance and love. We can all contribute in our own way to mentor and educate children so they may solve and fix what we did not."

Dr. Lederman's work as a Nobel laureate, professor, author, physicist, and soldier, as well as, his inspiration of many of today's leading scientists, educators and businessmen will continue to have a positive impact on the world for generations to come.

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BCT is a land and cultural heritage conservancy chartered to protect, in perpetuity, the diverse fish and wildlife habitat, as well as, cultural heritage sites for the Caddo Indians, early French explorers, and Creoles. BCT was formed by the merging of the La Louisiane Land Trust and the Evangeline Conservancy. It has grown to include a community of ecologists, wildlife biologists, silviculturists, engineers, environmentalists, archeologists, farmers, ranchers, professors, and historians. With offices in New Orleans, Dallas, and Hong Kong, BCT delivers economically and environmentally sustainable conservation programs.

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