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This year we celebrate our diamond jubilee, the 75th anniversary of the Speech Communication Association. On the morning of November 28, 1914, at a Chicago convention of the National Council of Teachers of English, 17 individuals from 13 different institutions voted unanimously to discontinue their status as a section of the English Council and to organize the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking.

Until that day, most college-level instruction in speech communication had been located in departments of English language and literature. This situation came about when, as higher education began to departmentalize in the 1860s, departments of English, tracing their roots to the study of rhetoric, asserted responsibility for instruction in both written and oral communication. As English developed as an academic specialty, however, it increasingly strived for academic respectability by focusing on intensive literary study and linguistics—a move which left little room for those interested in teaching the skills of practical discourse. The result was pressure from speech communication professionals for autonomous academic departments and an independent professional organization.

These pressures existed from the founding of the National Council of Teachers of English in 1910. Giles Wilkeson Gray (1964) explains that: "... one can almost say that it was the recalcitrance of the National Council of Teachers of English and the refusal of some of its most influential members and officers to yield at any point, or in the slightest degree, that provided the impetus for a separation The National Council program directors would not permit those interested in speech to organize and present their own problems; nor would the speech group be satisfied with the programs prepared for them by the Council directors."¹

At the 1913 meeting of the National Council, therefore, the section on Public Speaking appointed a committee (comprising James O'Neill of the University of Wisconsin, Charles Woolbert of the University of Illinois, and Clarion Hardy of Northwestern University) to investigate the advisability of starting a professional organization of public speaking teachers.

The committee considered the proposal and, according to Andrew Weaver (1959): "One year later, November 27th, 1914, another ballot shows 57 for an independent association of teachers of public speaking, and 56 for continuing as a section of the English Council. A motion is made "That a National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking be organized." A long debate ensues, and then, by a vote of 18 to 16, the motion is laid on the table. On the following morning, 17 men representing 13 different institutions, vote unanimously to establish our Association."²

The profession has expanded considerably since that day 75 years ago when 17 individuals (most from Midwestern schools, and nine from the Big Ten) founded what is currently the Speech Communication Association. Contrast the present convention with our first, held in Chicago on November 25-27, 1915, in the Florentine Room of the Congress Hotel. While we don't know how many of the 160 members attended the meeting, 19 individuals' names are included in the program. This convention, according to Robert Jeffrey,3 began with committee meetings and informal conferences on Thursday evening, November 25. Friday morning was devoted to the Presidential Address and presentations on the freshman course in public speaking, oratorical contests, and techniques of stage management. No meetings were scheduled on Friday afternoon so that individuals would be free to attend the Public Speaking Section of the National Council of English Teachers held simultaneously at the Auditorium Hotel. Friday evening was devoted to discussion and voting on six resolutions: "Standardized Rules for Intercollegiate Debate? The Improvement of Speaking Contests in the High Schools? College Entrance Requirements in Reading and Speaking? The Practice of Publishing and Distributing Briefs, Outlines, Speeches, etc. to Debating Teams in Schools and Colleges? The Establishment of a Summer School for Teachers? The Standardization of Elementary Courses in Colleges and Universities?" Saturday morning, November 27, featured presentations on oral interpretation, speech science, and speech making. The convention ended with a business meeting at 2:30 on Saturday afternoon.

We have grown since that first convention. Instead of 160 members, we now approach 7,000. Instead of 19 individuals on the program, we now have over 2,000. And our early focus on debate and public speaking has expanded to include an almost unlimited variety of communication contexts, settings, purposes, and constructs.

Despite these vast changes, however, one feature of the profession and our association—has not changed. In the face of a long-standing verbal commitment to affirmative action and cultural pluralism, we remain an association comprising primarily middle-class WASPs. Douglas Ehninger made this feature the theme of the 1968 Presidential Address, "Of Relevance, Relatedness, and Reorientation."

Because speech as an academic subject first flowered and has always found its most congenial habitat in the predominantly Protestant Anglo-Saxon Middle West, we have traditionally been a WASPish profession. Indeed, even today a demographic analysis of SAA membership undoubtedly would show proportionally fewer representatives of minority groups—fewer Catholics, Jews, and Latins, and certainly far fewer Blacks—than are to be found in our population as a whole.⁴

And today, more than 20 years later, we must admit to the same regret. While the national office does not keep statistics relevant to my point, I doubt that anyone would challenge my assertion that African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos are not proportionately represented in our midst. In the short time I have with you this morning, I would like to share some reasons why I believe our field should—*must*—be characterized by cultural pluralism. Let me start at a personal level. As I do so, I hope you will ask yourself if my experiences ring true for you.

As some of you know, I grew up in Minnesota, a state enshrined in the nostalgic mist of small-town life, of Lake Wobegon, "the little town that time forgot and the decades cannot improve…where all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average." While I remember that time—and even that town! with great fondness, scattered among those pleasant memories is a reminder of the roots of some less pleasant characteristics. Several of these are summarized in a section of *Lake Wobegon Days* by Garrison Keillor—"95 Theses 95"—a neatly typed manifesto of complaint against his upbringing that a former Wobegonian "brought home in late October 1980, along with a fine woman from Boston whom his parents wanted to meet, since he had married her a few weeks before."⁵ Let me share two of the theses:

12. You taught me to be competitive even in matters of faith, to take pride in the great privilege of having been born Lutheran, even at moments of contrition. Religious intolerance was part of our faith. We believed that Catholics were illiterate peasants, foreign-born, who worshiped idols. In Sunday School, we looked up to see a gory picture of 'Christian Infants Martyred at the Hands of Papist Clergy.' We believed there was a secret tunnel between rectory and nunnery. We believed they poisoned the pets of Protestants. Whatever they believed, it wasn't right.⁶

At an earlier point in his book, Garrison Keillor illustrates Thesis 12 with another example:

In Lake Wobegon, car ownership is a matter of faith. Lutherans drive Fords, bought from Bunsen Motors, the Lutheran car dealer, and Catholics drive Chevies from Main Garage, owned by Kruegers. . . . Years ago, John Tollerud was tempted by Chevyship until (then) Pastor Tommerdahl took John aside after church and told him it was his (Pastor Tommerdahl's) responsibility to point out that Fords get better gas mileage and have a better trade-in value. And he knew for a fact that the Kruegers spent a share of the Chevy profits to purchase Asian babies and make them Catholics. So John got a new Ford Falcon. It turned out to be a dud. The transmission went out after ten thousand miles and the car tended to pull to the left. In a town where car ownership is by faith, however, a person doesn't

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complain about these things, and John figures there must be a good reason for his car trouble, which perhaps he would understand more fully someday.⁷

We return now to the second thesis—Thesis 62—that I want to share with you:

62. Bigotry is never a pleasant subject so you didn't bring it up but you stuck by your guns anyway. Indians were drunks. Jews were thieves, and the colored were shiftless. Where you got this, I don't know, because there were none of them around but you believed it more absolutely for the utter lack of evidence. Everyone knew about those people. It was common sense.⁸

As a result of an ethnocentric upbringing (I don't recall, for example, meeting an African American, a Jew, a Native American, or an Asian American until well into my college career) and as a result of stereotypes which I managed to accumulate as a good Lutheran, I have experienced many embarrassing moments. I have also learned to empathize with Rachel A. Simon, a white Oberlin senior, who says she spoke up only once in her introductory Black-studies course: "As a good Oberlin student," she says, "you don't want to sound racist and prejudiced, and you don't want to make a fool out of yourself in front of 160 people by saying something offensive."⁹ I am also adept at what Meg Greenfield labels the Condescension of Whitespeak: "... a kind of dissembling, hypocritical, ghastly, Goody-Two-shoes language of condescension, specially created by your tonier white people over the past couple of decades for discussions of—and with—blacks."¹⁰

Let me share three moments that I wish I had been prepared and able to avoid—embarrassing vignettes that play on to this day in the theatre of my mind. I wish that they were the **only** ones that I recall.

One event occurred at the University of Minnesota where I had enrolled after graduating from a Lutheran High School and a Lutheran Junior College (I had been studying to be a Lutheran minister—and follow in my father's and his family's footsteps). During my two years at the University, it was my good fortune to debate on a squad coached by Robert Scott and Donn Parson. After a tournament my junior year, a number of us were sitting around talking about our experiences. In the midst of our discussion, I complained that my partner and I had been "Jewed" by a judge. Another person in our group, Mal Cohen, retorted, "Don't you mean 'Christianed?' For the first time I realized the utter inappropriateness—and the enormous potential for damage ipherent in the thoughtless use of just one little word.

A second incident occurred at Purdue University, the location of my first job in the discipline. In my interviewing class I had been using an instrument called "The Dove Test," created by a Watts social worker named Adrian Dove, to illustrate the impact of environment on what people know. Mr. Dove had generated about twenty questions that lowerclass blacks living in Watts could answer, but most other people could not. On the day before I intended to use the "test," I discovered that I had misplaced the answers. So I hurried over to the office of the only African American graduate student in the program, Bailey Baker, and asked him to help me generate the correct answers. With a sly smile on his face, he asked me why I thought he would know them.

A third incident also occurred at Purdue, an institution which, when arrived there in 1968, had graduated less than a half dozen women ph.D.s. I had applied to the Research Council and received funding for a research assistant. After a great deal of thought about whom I wanted to work with, I selected Gary Scott. For some reason, however, I felt the need to explain my choice to Mary Etta Port—a bright female graduate student who would have also been an excellent choice, but a woman (What would people think?). I expected her to appreciate the fact that I was sensitive to the "need" to protect her reputation. (She wasn't.)

My first reason for wanting cultural pluralism to characterize our discipline, then, is one of self-interest. I have much to learn about communication, about myself, and about others, which depends on an ability to know and interact comfortably with people from differing backgrounds.

There is also a very practical reason for the profession to want to be characterized by mulicultural pluralism. The world continues to get smaller, and the need for global awareness greater. According to the Council on International Educational Exchange (1988): 33 percent of

U.S. corporate profits are generated by international trade; the 23 largest U.S. banks derive half their total earnings overseas; four of every five new jobs in the United States are generated as a direct result of foreign trade; foreign individuals and corporations are estimated to have invested \$1.5 trillion in the United States, most of it since 1974.¹¹ The composition of the American population is also rapidly changing: projections indicate that ethnic and racial minorities will compose one-third of the U.S. population by the year 2000 and 45 percent by 2050. If, in our instructional and research efforts, we ignore these demographics, we are likely to find ourselves quickly—and deservedly—irrelevant. For self-preservation alone, then, it is important that our field provide high-quality, culturally diverse systems of communication education. And to do this, it is absolutely imperative that we pursue and promote a culturally diverse population of teachers to lead the way.

There are, of course, more compelling reasons for encouraging cultural pluralism than that of self interest. J. Jeffery Auer articulated a variety of moral reasons in his recent Central States Communication Association speech:

As I wind toward a conclusion, some of you may remember having heard me speak, on other occasions, about the communication scholar's task as working on the walls. We may take pride in the research and teaching that have helped our students break through the walls of silence and isolation with effective and responsible speech. I would extend that metaphor into the future, hoping we can do as well with still other walls that must be torn down. They are not natural ones like mountain ranges, or [human]-made ones like the Great Wall of China, but the sometimes invisible walls that exist between peoples, nations, tribes, religions, and castes . . . between the young and the old, the poor and the rich, the unfortunate ones with AIDS and the lucky ones without.

These are walls of racism, isolationism, sexism, chauvinism, and cultural elitism. They can be breached and destroyed only in a society that cherishes freedom of speech, and a society that celebrates cultural pluralism at home and in the world. Who better than members of this audience know how to get this done?¹²

A number of recent national reports remind us that racism is alive and well. A National Research Council Study, for example, with a relatively conservative membership, concludes that while conditions for both African Americans and Caucasians have improved greatly since 1939 by most economic and social measures, the gap between these two groups has not been significantly narrowed-and progress has even been reversed in the past decade. The report blames racism and a sagging U.S. economy for the thwarting of the progress of African Americans.¹ While we might like to believe that the college campus is largely immune to the negative effects of Professor Auer's walls, such is not the case. As a recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education reminds us: 'Almost 30 years after the civil-rights movement made improved race relations a top priority for higher education, ugly and embarrassing incidents between white and black students continue to plague colleges and universities across the country. . . . The National Institute Against Prejudice & Violence, located in Baltimore, has used newspaper clippings to document incidents of racial tension at 175 colleges since 1986-87. . . . (T)he institute's total does not reflect the actual number of incidents-it is based solely on those that received publicity."14

For practical and moral reasons, and for reasons of relevance to our changing reality, it is imperative that we as a field encourage cultural pluralism. What does that mean? Let me start by negation—using an excerpt from Professor Ehninger's 1968 Presidential Address. He explains that:

... more often than not our professional concerns have been those of a particular social or ethnic group. In our textbooks and classes, and even to a certain extent in the problems we have chosen to research, we have reflected this group's needs and values. We have stressed 'public' at the expense of private or interpersonal communication; we have emphasized the importance of speech training as a factor in social and economic success; we have placed among the leading topoi of our rhetorics the upper middle class values of initiative, self-reliance, and freedom of opportunity. In short, we have assumed that it is both the desire and the duty of every [individual] to succeed in business or a profession, to love ... neighbor as [family], and to honor the democratic institutions of discussion and the ballot box as the only acceptable methods of effecting change. In those few instances in which we have reached out to embrace minority groups within our instruction we have been little interested in adapting our assumptions and values to theirs and more concerned with bringing them within our own orbit—with correcting what we have regarded as a foreign or deviant dialect, a substandard grammar, or a wrong-headed notion concerning the role that communication should play in society.¹⁵

Professor Auer, in his Central States address, puts the definition of cultural pluralism affirmatively:

... asking for acceptance of pluralism at home or abroad is not the same as asking for tolerance. Displaying tolerance requires only patience while each cultural minority does or says its thing. But accepting pluralism requires a real effort to understand other cultural entities, to listen to what they say, and to appreciate the context from which they speak.¹⁶

Professor Deborah Atwater makes the same point with a vivid metaphor. She argues that, as a discipline, we need to stop transmitting and valuing the "melting pot" theory—a theory which does not fit the history or current circumstances of Native Americans, African Americans, Chicanos, and Asian Americans. What we have, she argues, is a layered "salad," where the top of the salad consists of those groups who most closely approximate the Anglo mode. What we **need** to do, she argues, is change our metaphor for American society to that of a "tossed salad." Professor Atwater explans that:

You can toss a salad to enhance the flavor so each distinct ingredient contributes to the taste of the salad as a whole . . . (T)he specific cultures of minority students should be considered when planning curricula, teaching speech classes, and conducting teaching training programs. Each culture has something to offer to society, so let's recognize it and not try to blend or melt it.¹⁷

As we—as individuals and as a field of study—accept cultural pluralism as a goal toward which to strive, how must we proceed?

To begin with, as individuals, we must make a behavioral commitment to cultural pluralism. When you're choosing textbooks and other materials for your courses, consider whether these materials are sensitive to and **celebrate** cultural differences. In your classes, implement the "Guidelines for Student-Faculty Communication" which identifies and proposes "solutions for problems of stereotyping, biases in language structures and usages, and patterns of discrimination in classroom interaction that can differentially affect women and men of varied cultural backgrounds."¹⁸ When colleagues make prejudicial or inappropriate remarks, or engage in inappropriate behavior (and I regret to admit that we do and will), have the courage and decency to challenge them publicly.

There is also much to be done within the context of both our departments and our associations. Our departments, for example, must be encouraged to offer intercultural and interracial courses—and we should work to make these courses basic university requirements for graduation. In doing this, we should solicit the support of agencies such as the Ford, Andrew W. Mellon, and Rockefeller Foundations, which have provided the bulk of private support for scholarship or teaching projects that address issues of cultural pluralism, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, which has played a significant public role.

A number of additional concrete actions have been suggested in a recent report entitled, "Meeting the National Need for Minority Scholars and Scholarship," a report of a panel of 34 scholars and administrators. Among their suggestions:

... faculty members need to give more recognition to topics and styles of scholarship that are of particular interest to minority scholars but may have been undervalued, discouraged, or ignored by other scholars.

Faculty members, in addition to being more open to minority scholarship, should reach out to minority scholars and serve as their mentors.

Associations representing academic disciplines should state explicitly that they welcome the perspectives of scholars of all cultures, and they should create leadership opportunities for minority scholars through internships, committee appointments, and fellowship programs.¹⁹

A preliminary step toward greater diversity in scholarship occurred at last year's SCA convention where a double program, sponsored by the Publications Board, focused on "Diversity as Scholarly Enrichment in SCA's Publications Program." A related venture, entitled "Avoiding Sexism in Communication Research," was recently forwarded to me by both Anita Taylor and Carol Valentine.

But our efforts to embrace these and other necessary tasks will be futile unless they are supported by a solid data base. SCA should, therefore, make a major effort to collect and disseminate data on minority scholars and programs. Tracking the participation of minority scholars and students in our profession is an important step toward increasing it. Toward this end, I recently appointed a committee on "Data for the Profession," headed by N. Edd Miller, to provide guidance in terms of the data we need, procedures for gathering it, and methods of dissemination.

As important as these actions are, however, the ultimate test of our commitment resides in our willingness and ability to attract into our ranks individuals from minority cultures. This will not be an easy task, as the demographics are currently against us. Despite the fact that American minority students made up nearly 18 percent of the nation's undergraduates in 1986, minority-group members (including non-U.S. citizens) held only 10 percent of the nation's full-time faculty positions in 1985. These proportions are unlikely to change soon—especially for African Americans. In 1985, this group represented 4.1 percent of the nation's full-time faculty members, down from 4.4 percent in 1975. The proportion teaching at predominantly white institutions is estimated at 2.3 percent. In 1988, African Americans earned 805 doctorates—3.5 percent of all doctorates awarded to U.S. citizens; 22 percent fewer than they earned in 1978.²⁰

If we are to succeed in our goal of increased pluralism, we will need to actively recruit minority group members into our undergraduate and graduate programs. Steve Smith's SCA Undergraduate Task Force provides a number of excellent suggestions for attracting undergraduate students into our ranks. These suggestions can be supplemented by the advice of Barbara Hall on undergraduate advising²¹ and that of Ann Darling and Gregory Abrams' on how TAs can assist African-American students at risk.²²

At the graduate level, it is especially important that we create an environment which enhances the possibility of success for women and minority students. In a recent speech, Sheila E. Widnall, Abby Rockefeller Mauze Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics at M.I.T., summarized a number of recent studies which suggest that women (and minorities) enter graduate school at about the same rate as men relative to their presence in the undergraduate pool, but drop out at a higher rate before attaining the Ph.D.²³ While most of the research she cites relates to women, Dr. Widnall asserts, based on a smaller number of studies, that similar patterns are true for minorities.

One reason for this differential dropout rate is the fact that the college experience lowers the career ambitions and self-esteem of women students, while raising those of men. The Illinois Valedictorian Project, for example, followed 80 students (46 women and 34 men) who graduated in 1981 at the top of their high school classes. At the conclusion of the undergraduate experience, the women had earned a grade point average of 3.6; the men's average was 3.5. While the women's academic records and test scores were equivalent to those of the men, their self-esteem scores were not. Despite starting with comparable scores upon graduation from high school, shocking differences appeared by the end of college. While the men's scores increased slightly, the women's academics appeared dramatically. By the senior year of college, for example, 25 percent of the men had a self-estimate in the highest category; 0 percent of the women were in this category.

Women and minorities, then, start graduate school with lower selfesteem and career ambitions. Once there, these perceptions are reinforced in numerous ways: (1) Women meet less frequently with their research advisers (most of whom are male) than do men. Since the adviser is the primary gatekeeper for the profession, this places women at great disadvantage in mastering the hidden agenda of a graduate education.(2) Studies in which male or female names are associated with such products as research proposals, essays, and vita consistently demonstrate that the potential and accomplishments of women are judged less favorably than those of men by both men and women.(3) Research

suggests that women are at a disadvantage with respect to the male forms of group interaction. Not only are women interrupted by men more frequently than are other men, women's contributions are often gnored or attributed to one of the men in the group. In addition, women dudents report discomfort with the combative style of communication valued by men in the context of classrooms and research groups.

What can be done? Professor Widnall suggests: "... an increased ensitivity on the part of faculty to the seriousness of women as professionals and the willingness of faculty to structure the research environment to enhance self-esteem and provide positive professional experiences are the most important features. A willingness by the faculty to publicly challenge professional colleagues who make prejudicial or inappropriate remarks about women students would improve the climate. An effort by faculty to make the group interaction a positive-sum game for all students, while being no less insightful and scientifically critical, would enhance the graduate experience."24

William S. Howell in his Presidential Address said that: "The presidential year . . . resembles the last chance saloon, or the filling station before the desert. It is a one shot deal. The President either affects the enterprise, or...does not."25 I hope that my last shot "affects the enerprise." To provide an extra edge, I have appointed an SCA Affirmative Action Committee to further the agenda I have just described. It is chaired by Carolyn Calloway-Thomas and has met at this conference. Before this conference ends, I hope you will offer your support in any way you can.

I do not underestimate the difficulty of the task I've outlined today. Nor do I underestimate the ability of each of you to make a real conribution to it. Since at least the late 1960s, as 1974 President Samuel Becker pointed out, our association has been committed to the challenge of affirmative action.26 Yet, as Patti Gillespie demonstrated in her address two years ago, neither women nor African Americans have made the tremendous strides in academe that we and our students like to pretend they have.27 Achieving the goal of cultural pluralism requires more than a verbal commitment. It needs the same level of dedication as that of the 17 individuals who founded our association 75 years ago. With these pioneers as your role model, then, please take the opportunity before the close of this conference to identify at least one concrete action that you personally will perform to further the cause of cultural pluralism. Let us together put multiculturalism at the heart of our personal, educational, and research endeavors as we enter the last quarter of the association's first 100 years.

Note: This speech has benefited from the encouragement and suggestions of my wife, Erena Rae, my son, Bruce Friedrich, and a number of friends and colleagues-especially, Young Kim, Ralph Webb, Rod Hart, Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, Larry Wieder, Jim Chesebro, and Jim Gaudino.

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⁴Douglas Ehninger, "Of Relevance, Relatedness, and Reorientation," Excerpts from the 1968 Presidential Address," Spectra, February, 1969, p. 4.

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⁷Ibid, pp. 139-140.

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¹³Ellen K. Coughlin, "Report Blames Racism and a Sagging U.S. Economy for Stagnation in Progress of Black Americans," The Chronicle of Higher Education, August 2, 1989, pp. A4-5, A7.

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¹⁶J. Jeffery Auer, "Pride in Our Past-Faith in Our Future," Conference Address at the Central States Communication Association Convention, Kansas City, April 14, 1989.

¹⁷Deborah F. Atwater, "Issues Facing Minorities in Speech Communication Education: Moving from the Melting Pot to a Tossed Salad,' Paper presented at the Eastern Communication Association Convention, Ocean City, MD, May 5, 1989.

¹⁸Mercilee M. Jenkins, Removing Bias: Guidelines for Student-Faculty Communication, A part of "Sex and Gender in the Social Sciences: Reassessing the Introductory Course," Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1983.

¹⁹Peter Monaghan, "Action, Not Just Policy Change, Seen Needed to Improve Minority Scholars' Opportunities," The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 8, 1989, p. A18.

²⁰Carolyn J. Mooney, "Affirmative-Action Goals, Coupled With Tiny Number of Minority Ph.D.'s, Set Off Faculty Recruiting Frenzy," The Chronicle of Higher Education, August 2, 1989, p. A10.

²¹Barbara I. Hall, "What Should be the Role of Academic Advising for the High Risk Student?" Paper presented to the Central States Communication Association Convention, Kansas City, MO, April, 1989.

²²Ann L. Darling and Gregory C. Abrams, "Making the difference: How Speech Communication TAs can Assist African-American Students at Risk," Paper presented at the Central States Communication Association Convention, Kansas City, MO, April, 1989.

²³Sheila E. Widnall, "AAAS Presidential Lecture: Voices from the Pipeline," Science, 241, September 30, 1988, pp. 1740-1745. ⁴*Ibid*, p. 1745.

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²⁶Samuel L. Becker, "For a New Age of Enlightenment," Presidential Address, December, 1974, Spectra, April, 1975, p. 5.

²⁷Patti P. Gillespie, "Campus Stories, or The Cat Beyond the Canvas," 1987 Presidential Address, Spectra, January, 1988, pp. 3-4.

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