

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

LEGACY VOICES: LETTERS TO THE NEXT GENERATION

Dear Class of 2019 Student Laureates,

During Illinois' Bicentennial last year, it was fitting that The Lincoln Academy of Illinois inaugurate a new annual tradition focused on connecting our distinguish Lincoln Laureates with our next generation of leaders - our Student Laureates. Called Legacy Voices: Letters to the Next Generation, we asked our Laureates to write a personal letter to each Student Laureate, sharing their story and offering insights of "lessons learned". Each said "yes" and their letters were included in the Student Laureate's Convocation Program book.

This past May in Springfield, six exceptional Illinois were honored with the Lincoln Academy's Order of Lincoln, Illinois' highest honor, presented by Governor J.B. Pritzker.

In keeping with our "new" tradition, we asked our 2019 Laureates, to write a letter to the incoming Student Laureates - those who would receive the Lincoln Medal this fall at a ceremony to be held in Springfield. Each graciously agreed and their Legacy Voices: Letters to the Next Generation are included in this year's Convocation Program book.

It is not often we have the opportunity to speak directly to our next generation of leaders, those who are highly motivated to use their lives well, and contribute to their communities, their nation, and the world, at this time. These young people seek role models and mentors of integrity – leaders whose moral compass points True North and who have lived and led in the "spirit of Abraham Lincoln".

Our 2019 Laureates are such leaders. Their work and wisdom come to life in the letters that follow — letters written directly to our Student Laureates of 2019 — letters of inspiration, leadership, hope, and faith in the future and in them.

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

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois is sincerely grateful to our Laureates of 2019 for being a part of Legacy Voices: Letters to the Next Generation.

We know you will be inspired.



Stephanie Pace Marshall, Ph.D
Lincoln Laureate, 2005

Jerry Colangelo
2400 E. Arizona Biltmore Circle
Building 2, Suite 1270
Phoenix, Arizona 85016

To Students of the Illinois Academy:

It is my honor to contribute a small bit of advice for your future. Throughout your life, you will face many challenges and obstacles. How you resolve those will distinguish you from your peers. My best advice is to be a sponge. Spend as much time as possible with people who truly know their craft and be a great listener. That is how you learn. Observe and listen.

Best of luck to all of you on your continued paths to great success.

Regards,



Jerry Colangelo

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois



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Dear Lincoln Academy Student Laureates,

- Congratulations on being named a Student Laureate of The Lincoln Academy of Illinois. You have received this honor as a recognition of your commitment to leadership and service and it's my hope that you will continue that commitment as you graduate and begin your careers.

We must never forget that our first priority is to serve others and to lead in a way that strengthens our organizations and empowers the people around us. When I reflect on my life, I see how much I owe to the community where I grew up and where I've spent my career: the city of Springfield. For that reason, I've made it a priority to serve that community - not only as a volunteer for worthy causes, but also by asking myself how the organization I lead, Memorial Health System, can do more to support our neighbors across our city and region.

As you begin this new phase in your lives, I ask you to do the same. Wherever you find yourself after graduation, be sure to seek out opportunities to serve. Those opportunities can be found in unlikely places and can shape your future in ways you never envisioned. By remaining focused on serving others, you'll discover the true meaning of leadership.

Congratulations and best wishes for a bright future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Curtis", written in a cursive style.

Edgar J. Curtis
President and Chief Operating Officer



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DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

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October 7, 2019

Dear Students of the Illinois Academy:

Congratulations the Class of 2019 Student Laureates! As you make your way in this world as future leaders of the next generation, I implore you to keep hope alive and do your best to make the world a better place.

You are a generation on the precipice – with climate change, increasing gun violence and a world in turmoil, what you face today is what people faced at other bleak times in our history where hope felt lost and finding true meaning in why we are here was overshadowed by a pervasive indifference to human life. The news of the day would lead one to believe that we are still trapped in this darkness. You must believe though that hope is neither lost nor is it a fool's errand.

Every day, I see hope on the faces of patients who suffer through the destructive, life-altering disease of cancer, in the work of young researchers who spend countless hours and dedicate their lives to finding answers that will lead to better treatments and improved outcomes for patients, to doctors in Low to Middle Income countries who fight against poverty, lack of education, and political chaos to bring innovative life-saving clinical trials to those in desperate need of help. As a graduate of my alma mater and first African Nobel Laureate in literature Wole Soyinka writes, "Human life has meaning only to that degree and as long as it is lived in the service of humanity." It implore you to carry on the work of countless others who never lost hope in humanity - you can decide to be the one to effect change in your community. Be a beacon of hope and through your actions, bring hope to others.

I wish you the very best in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Olufunmilayo I. Olopade, MD, FACP, OON
Walter L. Palmer Distinguished Service Professor
Associate Dean for Global Health
Director, Center for Clinical Cancer Genetics

The Lincoln Academy of Illinois


To the Students of the Illinois Academy:

It is a privilege to be able to address you with some suggestions for your future. I will confine myself to one: Read more books. Which means: Read less of what are called "social media," which might better be called anti-social media.

All of the time and attention lavished on the social media do not alter this fact:

Books remain the primary transmitters of lasting ideas. Social media are fine for communicating instant opinions and immediate "reactions" to events. Books take longer to read (and to write) because they are the result of reflection and research. Books draw readers into thoughtfulness. I have on my smartphone dozens of Audible books that I listen to in otherwise wasted time--dressing, commuting, standing in lines, etc. In addition, I have books on my Kindle, because spare time not spent reading is wasted time, lost forever.

So, when you are done reading this letter, pick up a book.



George F. Will