

Dr. Erik Zimmerman Memorial Service
May 19, 2007, Planetarium, 3:00 PM
Dr. Larson's Remarks

Wernher von Braun wrote: *"Our sun is one of 100 billion stars in our galaxy. Our galaxy is one of the billions of galaxies populating the universe. It would be the height of presumption to think that we are the only living things within that enormous immensity."*

If there is one thing upon which we can all agree without contradiction as we join together today in sadness to commemorate the passing of Dr. Erik Zimmerman, a member of the Ocean County College family since July of 1974 and for some thirty three years the College's most visible symbol of its commitment to teaching and learning about the science of astronomy, it would be that Eric held an abiding curiosity about our place in the universe and a resolute commitment to arouse in others, schoolchildren and college students alike, a desire to learn more about these wondrous mysteries.

Dr. Zimmerman joined us as our Planetarium Director and served with dedication, distinction, and great wisdom in that position until February of 2001 when he retired as a full-time member of the faculty and, after a short break, resumed his connection the College as reserve Planetarium Director and Operator and an adjunct faculty member. A man of many talents as a teacher, a scholar, and a leader, Erik was a modest man, and would not have boasted of his achievements. But he was a consummate professional.

He was a graduate of Pomona College with a BA in Astronomy and earned both his Masters and Ph. D. in Astronomy from UCLA. He was a member of the American Astronomical Society, the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, the International Society

of Planetarium Educators, the Middle Atlantic Planetarium Society, and Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society, just to name a few of his professional affiliations.

Albert Einstein said, *"A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving."*

Erik was both an appreciative beneficiary of the work of other scientists with a similar passion for studying the universe and an exemplar whose labors make possible what we do here today and in the future to keep his passion and his dreams alive at Ocean County College. Eric served this college well indeed over the past thirty-three years and he will be sorely missed.

I conclude with this insight from the great American novelist, John Steinbeck: *"Man, unlike any other thing organic or inorganic in the universe, grows beyond his work, walks up the stairs of his concepts, emerges ahead of his accomplishments."*

As we look forward to an ever brighter future for our planetarium and the challenging new frontiers that this future will surely bring, we will all cherish the memory of Eric's work and accomplishments, even as we walk up the stairs of the concepts he created here in this place that he loved.

Erik Zimmerman's life and work is embedded in the history of the Novins Planetarium and his legacy will be honored in its new and exciting future that would not have been possible without his countless contributions. I am very pleased to have this opportunity today to acknowledge Eric's legacy and honored to have been invited to participate in this memorial to his life and work.

Thank you.