

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

## DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

John Owens: Speeches & Appearances

Agriculture and Natural Resources, Institute of  
(IANR)

---

2004

### Distinguished Fellowship Awards Luncheon

John Owens

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, jowens2@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/owenspeech>



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#)

---

Owens, John, "Distinguished Fellowship Awards Luncheon" (2004). *John Owens: Speeches & Appearances*. 108.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/owenspeech/108>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Agriculture and Natural Resources, Institute of (IANR) at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in John Owens: Speeches & Appearances by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Dr. & Mrs. Clifford Hardin  
- Chancellen - Egan  
- U.S. Sec. of Ag. Res.  
- Hardin Hall

Distinguished Fellowship Awards Luncheon  
October 11, 2004  
John C. Owens  
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

What a treat it is to be here today at this distinguished fellowship awards luncheon to recognize and celebrate our 18 graduate students who are recipients of this year's awards. For each of you, I see your award as a wonderful recognition of your talent and promise. We are so pleased to have you learning and working with us in your chosen departments in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and on behalf of all of us in the Institute, I extend the heartiest-of-congratulations to each of you.

And even as I congratulate you for your accomplishments to - this point, accomplishments that have brought you here today, I cannot help but envision all you will accomplish in the coming years as you grow your careers. I think of all you will contribute

to the world body of knowledge, all you will add to your fields, and to our world. The prospect is absolutely exhilarating!

Some of you may, in the future, make scientific advancements others of us in this room today can only dream of; some of you may pioneer breakthroughs not yet dreamed! Some may teach the next generation of students, fostering the future in that way. So many possibilities abound; so much discovery is yet to be made. And who knows where that discovery will lead? To more discovery, and application of those discoveries to better our world. This is a magnificent, exciting-path you're embarked upon, and those of us here in the Institute are extremely-pleased to be part of your journey.

Because I, too, work with the people you work with, I know you have the opportunity to learn and discover with exceptional, disciplined, principled-scientists as some of you pursue your masters degrees, and others your doctorates. You have the opportunity to question, to explore, to discuss issues from all angles. You have the opportunity to query some very fine minds

on what guides their principles of science, their decisions on science ethics, and why we are about the work we are about in this great land-grant university. I urge you to take advantage of every opportunity available!

Rudyard Kipling once wrote, "I keep six honest-serving men, they taught me all I knew; their names are what-and-when and where and why and how-and-who."

Journalists quote that Kipling saying as containing the tools of their trade, but I think "Why?" is a question that very well may be the patron-question of scientists, as well. As Isaac Asimov said, "The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not 'Eureka!' (I found it!) But 'That's funny...'"

And of course, "that's funny..." is inevitably followed by: "Why?"

The late Dermot-Coyne, a tremendous scientist, dry bean, and vegetable-breeder of international standing who was still working with graduate students here in the Institute when he

died at the age of 72, said he believed, "... the philosophy of research is transferred across the generations. You must constantly remind students that it's "an adventure." It's a process of exploration, and they need-to-use as much imagination as they possibly can. They can't have tunnel-vision but must stand back and look at things and "see" where new opportunities are."

I urge you to follow Dr. Coyne's advice. Scientific discovery is an adventure. You are explorers, seeking knowledge not yet known, "keys" to doors not yet opened. Use as much imagination as you possibly can. Look for new opportunities. Be open to them.

There is so "much" to learn, so "much" to explore, so "many" possibilities abound! We are pleased these graduate fellowships and scholarships you've received, for which you're recognized here today, "help" further your opportunities. We're pleased that the "people" who made these awards available through their "generous-gifts" to the university-foundation had the vision to make them possible, and "the-hope" for what your learning and

your contributions to the world might do. We're grateful for their belief in the value of our work in agriculture and natural resources, and their willingness to support that work down through the generations. These fellowships and scholarships are available because of people who had a passion for helping others learn and advance, and succeed, so that those they supported might in turn help others by their discoveries.

We are all part of a continuum in the advancement of science, each of us building on the work of those who went before us. We are glad to have you studying here with us in the Institute, and we congratulate you most-heartily on earning yourself a place at today's distinguished-fellowship-award-luncheon.

Again, congratulations.