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[Music playing]

Good morning and welcome to the NIEHS and the headquarters of the National toxicology program.

I'm George Lucier and I worked here for 31 years. I retired in 2000 but I'm sure glad to be back, I'm glad to be back here seeing old friends and looking at the Institute again.

We're here today, of course, to officially welcome Dr. Linda Birnbaum as the new director of the NIEHS and the NTP.

This is a wonderful Institute and I'm so glad to be back here and Dr. Birnbaum's going to be a correspondingly wonderful director of the NIEHS.

It's good to see you all here. It's good to see your family, Linda. Dave, Lisa, who'll be part of this program later on, I see Holly is here.

I guess Bernie is in Colorado and can't be here, but it would have been good to see him as well. It's also good to see Congressman Price and his wife, and a representative from Congressman Miller's office.

I understand that Congressman Etherage will try to be here as well.

As most of you know, Congressmen Etherage and Price have really been strong supporters of the NIEHS and of environmental health research over the years and we appreciate you taking your time to be here.

We know that things are a bit hectic in Washington right now so thank you for coming here, it shows your commitment to this Institute and the National Toxicology Program.

The NIEHS began 43 years ago and at that time it was located across the street. It was just a couple of small buildings, a small band of scientists and administrators.

None of us would have thought that this is what the Institute would have become 43 years later, but we're sure glad that it did.

In those 43 years there have been four directors that have preceded Dr. Birnbaum and each of them have left a substantial mark on this Institute.

Dr. Paul Kotin was the first Director, and he really defined the scope of environmental health research and what the scope of the institute would be in the future.

David Raul was Director for 20 years. He really brought tremendous resources to this Institute--brought this building here, for one thing.

He brought international prominence and scientific excellence to the NIEHS and also the National toxicology Program when it was formed through the Public Health Service Act of 1978.

Ken Olden was the third director. What Ken recognized is that the public is the one that pays for our research, our salaries, and they are the ones that we need to be accountable to.

So he established an environmental health outreach programs that were really outstanding and a model for others to follow in this area.

David Schwartz was here for a short time but he recognized the importance of translational research and applications to the clinic. Dr. Birnbaum, the first female Director of the NIEHS, will leave her mark as well.

I cannot think of another person on this planet who is better equipped to handle a dual role--of the NIEHS and the NTP--than Dr. Birnbaum.

As most of you know, and this is my simple version of the mission of the NIEHS, is to understand and prevent environmentally-mediated diseases. An equally simple mission statement for the NTP is to provide toxicological evaluations on substances of public health concern.

And to provide the scientific foundation to which regulatory decisions can be made. It takes a special person to be able to marry those two missions to create the synergy to foster the creative environment

that will ensure that both of those missions will be successful, not only individually but together. And I believe that Dr. Birnbaum is that person.

When I was thinking about what I wanted to say today, with the introductory statements, I wanted to say a few things about what the achievements of the NIEHS and NTP have been over the years.

And I came up with a list of ten, I could come up with a much longer list but I limited it to ten. And I think each of you could probably come up with a different list, and it might even be a better list than mine.

One is the sister study--this is, we just finished recruiting 50,000 women whose sisters have had breast cancer. This is a remarkable study and preliminary data is now just becoming available, a couple of publications have just been released;

and I have no doubt that this study because of its size and complexity and design, will lead to incredible discoveries in terms of the treatment and prevention of breast cancer.

Bisphenol A is a chemical that has been very controversial, it's a component of plastic, it's an epoxy of resins, and people have argued for years over whether it's toxic to people, is it not, should it be in plastic, should it not be...

And NIEHS has done what it's always done in situations like this-- conducted research, taken an objective look at the data available; and concluded that there was some evidence that developmental effects to the brain and the prostate and behavior were occurring from exposure to Bisphenol A.

And I think I just read in the newspaper that some companies are now voluntarily removing Bisphenol A from their products.

Hexavalent Chromium, that's the substance that made Erin Brockovich famous. And again, there's been a lot of arguments over whether or not this is a human carcinogen in drinking water or is it not?

And the NTP conducted a study and just said yes, when drinking water contains sufficient amounts of Hexavalent Chromium, it is in fact a carcinogen.

In 2006, the NIEHS completed sequencing of the DNA of 15 mouse strains that are commonly used in biomedical research. This will provide an extraordinary resource for scientists around the world that are studying various types of diseases.

When I was here I had the chance to work with Carl Barrett on some of his studies related to susceptibility genes--particularly as they relate to prostate and breast cancer. And as many of you know this has really led many of us in how we think about susceptibility genes and their role in cancer etiology.

On a broader sense, the areas of mechanism-based toxicology and epidemiology have been largely led by scientists either here at the NIEHS or through various funding mechanisms and we are at the forefront of using this information, the technology--the powerful technologies that are becoming available to look at gene environment interactions so we can do a better job of clarifying dose/response relationships, identifying sensitive subpopulations, conducting cross species extrapolation and discovering better and more accurate markers of exposure.

Electromagnetic fields--my good friend Chris Portier is here and in the mid-1990s Congress asked us to identify knowledge gaps in the field to conduct research to fill those knowledge gaps and to make a statement as to what the health risk to EMFs might be.

And again, as we always do, we always respond to Congress, Congressman Price. We conducted a four-year study and released a report to Congress, that basically everyone agreed with;

and this was a very contentious area so I think the fact that we were able to put an objective, science-based view on a contentious issue, went a long way toward alleviating the public's fears about exposure to EMF.

[indiscernible] in disrupting chemicals back in the 1970s--John McLaughlin really started this area when he was here at the NIEHS; with his models for trans-placental carcinogenesis as they related to [diatolsobestrol].

Later, Ken Korach and others here at the NIEHS, in their very elegant studies, have looked at the interactions of estrogenically-active chemicals, with the estrogen receptor, and how this might be lead to toxic effects.

I have to put one in there about EHP. I spent 28 years as Editor, and of course after I left the editorship EHP has become the number one journal in the field of environmental health so you need to thank others for that and not me.

And no list of ten would be complete without Martin Rodbell, he was Scientific Director from 1985 to 1989, and then head of the signal transduction section from 89-94. And in 1994 along with Alfred Gilman, won the Nobel Prize in physiology for their seminal work on signal transduction pathways.

Getting back to Dr. Birnbaum. I first met Linda, I think it was 31 years ago, at a conference at the University of Massachusetts. And I can't quite remember what the conference was about but I think it was something to do with common ground between environmental health and human health.

And I remember being impressed by her at that time, not only for the strength of her science, but also her ability to think about that science in terms of public health policy.

Skip Matthews, who was head of the chemistry branch at the time, had the wisdom to hire Linda and bring her to be NIEHS and the rest is history. I think you just have to look at her CV to see that it's an absolutely tremendous record of accomplishment.

I could go on for a long time about what she has done. I will mention a few things, the role of metabolic activation/deactivation reactions in determining pharmacokinetic behavior; and determining what site-specific toxicities you might expect.

Another is the mechanism of action of dioxins and the host of related chemicals and derivation of toxic equivalency factors. And the third is linking mechanistic information to risk assessment uncertainties and there there's a lot of chemicals--dioxins, benzene, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, and a host of others.

Dr. Birnbaum is considered one of the leading toxicologists in the world; she's a past president of the Society of Toxicology, which is the largest organization of professional toxicologists in the world.

So let me say one other thing: I have had the pleasure of working with Dr. Birnbaum on some of these projects. And I can tell you, that when you collaborate with Dr. Birnbaum, not much grass grows under your feet.

She keeps things going. But let me end by saying that Dr. Birnbaum's record of accomplishment, her enthusiasm, her energy, her leadership, her commitment to scientific excellence, will make her an absolutely terrific Director of the NIEHS.

Let me now introduce Dr. Raynard Kington who is the acting Director of the NIH. Dr. Kington has been acting Director, I think since October, since Dr. Zerhouni left; prior to that he was Deputy Director of the NIH; so you are responsible for, and are responsible for, so much of the biomedical research and training that goes on in this country and I think the current budget of the NIH is close to \$30 billion.

Hopefully it will go up a little more--a billion--I'm sorry. You know, with this economic stimulus money the billions and trillions and millions get all mixed up. My apologies.

And I think--I think I got this right--there are 18,000 employees at the NIH. But please join me in welcoming Dr. Kington here, we're so glad you could come.

Thank you. It really is a pleasure to be here today and good morning to all of you. It's great to get outside of Washington, my blood pressure's dropped about 10 points, because we've been working really hard.

It's particularly a pleasure to welcome the Birnbaum family; Congressman Price, Ms. Price, and all of the employees of NIEHS and NTP who are here today for this celebration.

We are really here today because of Elias Zerhouni, the former director of NIH, who--and my colleagues who work with me here know this--would frequently mention the fact that when he became Director of NIH there was not a single ceremony to acknowledge this transition.

And he was determined that when there was an important leadership transition at the Agency that we would have some acknowledgement of the change--both to acknowledge what has happened before, but also to help adjust and welcome those who are coming in and carrying us to the future.

And I must admit I have become a fan because these are important occasions.

Now, technically Linda has already begun her tenure as the 5th Director of NIEHS two months ago; she quickly found herself facing the daunting but wonderful--thank you, Congressman Price--challenge of dealing with stimulus funds before she even had time to finish unpacking her office.

All of us have been struggling with this wonderful problem of making important decisions about allocation of these funds, which will have tremendous impact on the scientific infrastructure of this country.

Thank you again, Dr. Price and Congressman Obama--oh! I can't believe I said that. It wasn't even Senator Obama. Ok. You get the point.

From what I've heard, Linda has shown her characteristic enthusiasm in addressing the challenges that face her, and she has shown this enthusiasm, I am told, and it was confirmed from previous

comments throughout her career--her career has been largely spent right here in North Carolina, and she was trained in microbiology and biochemistry and she came here to RTP 30 years ago.

When she arrived in 1979, the NTP program, which she now directs, was just starting up. She remained with NTP until she took up her first position with the EPA in 1989.

The EPA had the great fortune of drawing upon her expertise, including 16 years as director of the experimental toxicology division, until she joined us here at NIH this winter.

She has distinguished herself as an extraordinary scientific leader and a noted toxicologist, not just at EPA and NIH but really, throughout the world and the toxicology community.

She is the former president of the Society of toxicology--the society is the largest professional organization of toxicologists in the world. Recently she was elected president of the International Union of toxicology--this is the umbrella organization of toxicology societies in more than 15 countries.

And even though our ethics rule prevents her from serving in that position, her election nonetheless demonstrates the respect that her colleagues have for her.

She has received many, many awards, women in toxicology [indiscernible] Mentoring Award, the Society of Toxicology Public Communications Award, EPA's Health Science Achievement Award and Diversity Leadership Award; and 12 Science and Technology Achievement Awards for specific publications.

She has authored more than 300 peer-reviewed articles and distinguished journals. She is an individual of a tremendous scientific accomplishment, administrative talent, and personal integrity; and all of those are essential characteristics for being able to lead a complex organization that has an extraordinary and demanding challenge before it.

We all know that we have the privilege of being involved in the scientific enterprise at a time when we have unprecedented opportunities. And Linda is up to the task of helping us figure out as an agency--and particularly, how NIEHS-- can play a role in exploring all of those opportunities using the resources that have been given to us by the American people.

Dr. Birnbaum's experience allows her to appreciate and understand a range of different areas of science; to coordinate multidisciplinary approaches to answering important questions in environmental health research; and I can tell you I had the privilege of interviewing a number of top candidates for this job, and I must say that almost immediately after interviewing Linda, I knew she was the right one.

And I told my boss at the time that at least I had reached my decision, and he quickly came to the same decision--that she was the right person at the right time with the right background to become an extraordinary leader and we welcome you to NIH.

And now I have the privilege of swearing you in and I will tell you-- I have never done this before. But I figure if the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court can have problems, I can surely do this. And I'm not a lawyer. So raise your right hand and repeat after me:

I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic--I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States from all enemies, foreign and domestic--We're going to try this again. Because last time, they had to do the presidential swearing in twice.

I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States, against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

That I will bear truth, faith, and allegiance to the same;

That I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation, or purpose of evasion.

[laughter]

That I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation, or purpose of evasion.

Between the number of degrees up here you would think that we'd be able to get this right.

And that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office that I'm about to enter. I so swear.

[applause]

Very smooth. Both of us.

I hope that was the hardest thing that I have to do for a while.

Well, first of all, thank you everyone for being here; I really cannot say enough about the support that I have been given in the seven weeks that I have been on board.

Many of you know that my first day was supposed to be the day that Obama took office, and I had the honor, for my first official duty, of closing the Institute because we had one of those rare North Carolina snow storms.

So it allowed this area to have the highest TV viewing of the inauguration of anywhere in the country. That was exciting.

But thank you very much, Dr. Kington. It is an honor to have you here today, as well as some of our other top leadership, from NIH, from Bethesda. Colleen Barrows, Chris Major, and Phil Lenowicz, who many of you know--who actually I believe spent 10 years here before he retreated to Washington. This is a very very special day for me and it's even more special because so many of my family members, friends and colleagues are here to share this occasion with me.

I first, though, want to think Christine Flowers. Christine, are you here? For the incredible job she and her staff have done in setting up this entire day. So let's all give her a hand.

[applause]

Christine is right there. So she really deserves a great deal of thanks. Before I say some substantial things, or substantive things, I want to briefly introduce my family who are sitting here, in the first couple of rows.

My husband David, who is a [applause] David's a retired mathematician, an amateur archaeologist and historian whose main job is to take care of me. My older daughter Holly is here, who is an attorney for the Department of Social Services in Gaston County, with her fiancée Jason Martin who is retired military, just returned recently from his second tour in Iraq.

My youngest daughter, my baby daughter, Lisa is an actor from New York. She was born while I was a senior staff fellow working here at NIEHS, but nobody knew I was pregnant until I got tenure.

And the day after, I went in to Skip Matthews and said Skip, I've got to take some time off this summer.

Unfortunately My son Bernie and his wife Rachel, who are both physicians in Colorado could not be here today and unfortunately that means that my two beautiful grandchildren, Maton and Ariel, are also not here. But you got to see some pictures of those little cuties here before.

But my baby sister Debbie, and my niece Carmie are here from Greensboro, and my cousin Chickie Smythe, who some of you may know from her days when she was Vice Provost at UNC, before she went into becoming a division director at the SEC and then big-time law in Washington, flew in from Washington today.

And I would also like to introduce Yula Cooper who helped raise my family and is still very much part of my family. And to my total shock, which I did not know until I was leaving the house this morning and my husband said, I have to show you something downstairs, and I walked into my guest room, and my cousin Carol, who is actually my big sister and her husband Howie had flown in to surprise me from New Jersey.

And then, I especially have to introduce you to my mom. Mom, can you stand up? And I have to tell you a little story here. Mom used to remind me that my grandmother always called me her Madam Curie, and why was that?

Well, I did win the state science fair when I was 14, and was then the New Jersey delegate to the first youth conference on the atom in Chicago, and I got to be featured in Life magazine as one of the upcoming young scientists.

This is quite a long time ago. But I need to thank my mom for allowing my interest in science-- how many parents would let their 14 year-old keep cages of rats in the basement to study thyroid hormone effects? And this is long before endocrine disruption became a household word.

My parents also taught me some other key lessons. Among them, have some fun every day. So I have tried to balance my family life with that of my work. Now today. And I take the pouring rain as a signal that the drought here at NIEHS has ended.

It is truly an honor to serve, as the NIEHS and the NTP. I am humbled and sincerely appreciative of this opportunity. I have always viewed NIEHS as the world's premier Environmental Health Research Organization.

I also feel very very fortunate to lead an institute that has had so many success stories, including a Nobel Prize winner, discovery of the breast cancer genes, the gold standard bioassay for cancer, and many more.

I'm especially pleased to be serving as the Director during a national movement for positive, constructive change in our government, and in our country, and at a time when health and the environment are top priorities.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the President and Congressman Price, and our Congress for their support of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and the funding for biomedical research that it includes.

In my view, there is no better time than now to be doing environmental health research. About half of the New Recovery Act Challenge grants have an environmental component and these grants present us with opportunities for NIEHS sponsored research or NIEHS collaborative research.

I believe that some specific and immediate opportunities exist for NIEHS in areas such as fetal exposure as the basis for adult disease; the health effect of nanoparticles; endocrine disruptors; toxicity/safety testing; children's environmental health; and susceptible populations, just to name a few. Global climate change has especially raised awareness of the environment as a significant factor in the need to protect public health.

Now research on environmental challenges to our health is getting much more complex. We have identified and controlled at least to some extent many of the really bad actors such as lead and asbestos.

But the more subtle toxicants--like BPA, and atrazine, require newer approaches. New technologies have emerged, that for the first time allow us to effectively screen for most environmental agents as well as chemical mixtures.

Recent discoveries have led to new theories of how the environment can lead to disease states. This is especially true in this new emerging field of epigenetics.

We are finding that more and more diseases are linked to gene environment interactions, making the identification of environmental triggers much more important than once thought.

For example stress, both environmental and social, has been shown to modulate immune response and effect disease rates. Identifying biomarkers that can predict who is most susceptible is a challenge but key to effective prevention.

Genomics, genetics, and systems biology are opening doors to identifying toxicants and predicting susceptibility. In addition, these systems-based approaches are key to addressing interactions between processes, behaviors, social factors and environmental factors that alter health.

Stem cells--and we recently have President Obama this week allowing us to again work with embryonic stem cells--hold the promise of advancing the identification of causes of childhood and adult diseases that have a fetal origin, with an environmental linkage.

By looking at multiple disease inputs and understanding how a certain environmental chemical or an environmental stressor can cause the disease process, researchers can prevent or halt the progression of many complex health problems.

We all need to make the whole bigger than the sum of the parts. Meaning we need individuals and teams to integrate across disciplines and work together to translate basic science into improved health for all.

We will work to cross- fertilize our own science teams at the institute. For example, creating more synergy and research opportunities between our intramural scientists, our NTP scientists, and our extramural scientists and grantees.

The Institute has a broad research portfolio. And under my leadership, the relevance of our research to environmental causes of disease and public health will be emphasized. At the NIEHS, translational research is more than bench to bedside.

It also includes bench to public policy and bench to public health. I see environmental health as a global issue that needs to be tackled from numerous angles.

Understanding how the environment impacts health, and then using that knowledge to improve health worldwide, is not something that the NIEHS can achieve on its own. In my mind, collaboration is key.

We will work to restore and foster new relationships with other NIH institutes. Other federal agencies, such as the CDC, EPA, FDA and Departments of Energy, Defense, and Agriculture.

Universities, community and advocacy groups. Professional societies. Members of Congress, the media. Other stakeholders. And of course, those who pay our bills, the general public.

Realizing that communication is a two-way street, we will look for more ways to share our science and in turn, to listen to what our colleagues, partners and stakeholders want us to hear.

We will invite and welcome many collaborators to our home base in RTP, and we plan on coming to them as well--to their meetings, facilities and labs; to their websites, blogs, podcasts and virtual worlds.

As someone who values open communication and transparency, I will work on restoring trust in our leadership and focus on building a more cohesive NIEHS. I am empowering those who work for me and with me and building a team that will share my vision while also challenging me with new ideas.

I look forward to working together to find answers to environmental health questions and to preventing environmental disease.

[applause]

[applause]

So now, please join me in welcoming my longtime friend and my neighbor, Congressman David Price.

[applause]

Good morning. What a great day. It's wonderful to be here with all of you and to commend and congratulate Linda Birnbaum and all of you who make this NIEHS Enterprise so important and so promising for our country and indeed for the entire human family.

It's a pleasure to be here. It's a special pleasure to follow Linda's remarks. What better demonstration could we have of the qualities that have brought her to this point and make her such a tremendous choice?

What a brilliant choice you have made, Doctor. She's reminded us of the important work that lies ahead but she's also demonstrated once again the commitment and the vision that have brought her to this leadership role.

I am happy to bring greetings on behalf of not just myself but the other members of Congress who represent the Triangle. Brad Miller has a representative here; and Bob Etherage had really hoped to join us, but we just got word that his mother in law passed away overnight, so that is the reason for his absence. So I bring you greetings from those colleagues.

Dr. Kington, we're very glad to have you here, glad your plane made it from Washington this morning under dubious circumstances; I'm glad to be here, too, with George Lucier to commend him for his leadership over the years with the National Toxicology Program and also his very substantial leadership role in the local community.

I want to recognize my wife Lisa, who especially wanted to join us today because of our association with Linda and David over the years, which includes being neighbors and the ultimate challenge of being parents of a teenage son.

A few years ago-- years that we remember well--our early years in Chapel Hill.

I think this is--whoever decided that there should be ceremonies of this sort and that we stop and mark transitions like this, I have really always believed in that. And I think this ceremony this morning underscores the wisdom and appropriateness of that.

Each of us have our own thoughts about our associations with this Institute and its work over the years. I have been thinking about not only my own early years of congressional service; they involved, in the very first days I was in office, a crash course on the good works of the NIEHS from the venerable David Rall.

And also, a quick message which was unmistakable, that I had an assignment in Washington. And that assignment was to make certain that the final increments of funding for this building were going to move forward without a hitch.

Fortunately that was not too hard a sell because NIEHS had developed a sterling reputation and the multi-year construction project had support in all the right places.

Over the ensuing years, saying the acronym NIEHS has not gotten any easier but a lot has happened with this Institute and its work. The Agency, its mission--and the same is certainly true of the NTP--they have become more familiar, they have seen their profiles raised as the general public has become more and more aware of what causes illnesses, how complex and interrelated many of those causes are, and the connection of the environment to our health.

I am especially glad to hear Linda stress this morning the importance of explicitly trying and working at increasing this understanding. We cannot assume in the research community or in lots of other endeavors that our good works always speak for themselves or that their importance is self evident, their entitlement to funding and to support.

We need to pay some attention to interpreting what we're doing. To explaining its importance. To making certain that audiences outside, and the general public, are aware of what is going on and the stake they have in it. That is not just self-promotion, that is a matter of taking our responsibility as interpreters and educators seriously and we're all educators in a sense. And so it doesn't surprise me to hear Linda say these things but I really do think that's an important emphasis and one that anybody involved in the federal research enterprise needs to take to heart.

I have memories also of years of interaction with Ken Olden, I guess the third director of NIEHS, who followed Dr. Rall. And that brings another kind of endeavor to mind--namely, funding. The effort year after year to do right by the NIH budget, and then, equally important to Ken Olden, to do right by NIEHS' budget within NIH. Not always exactly the same issue but we worked with that for many, many years.

And has been alluded to this morning fortunately there is some very good news on that front just now. The combination of the fiscal '09 omnibus appropriations bill, which finally, under ragged circumstances, got shaken loose last week in congress.

The combination of that with the funding for ready to go projects in the recovery bill, is going to take NIEHS funding well beyond last year's level. It will do that in a way that is sustainable and can contribute not only to scientific advancement but also the kind of economic turnaround that we're looking for and desperately needing in this country. And we hope to continue that progress with the 2010 budget which Congress is just beginning to work on.

Now we know that funding is critically important and I certainly am reminded of that every day as we talk about the work of this Institute. But today's ceremony reminds us that even more important than the funding is the human capital and the people.

The quality of the people who embody the mission of this Agency. And who do the life-saving and life-enhancing work of this Agency every day. Linda has exemplified this throughout her career both at NIEHS and at EPA.

She has remained an active research scientist even as she's taken on more and more demanding administrative and leadership roles. But all of you who comprise the NIEHS community are due the gratitude of the wider community for the scientific advances to which you contribute, and the skill and dedication that you demonstrate every day on behalf of the common good. You will now have a new and inspiring leader and we eagerly anticipate the paths you'll break together, in the years ahead. Thank you.

[applause]

Thank you, Congressman Price, and thank you, Dr. Birnbaum for articulating your vision for the Institute. Before we close the ceremonies let me remind you of a couple things.

One, there is going to be a scientific program this afternoon, I think starting at 1:00; with three presentations and immediately after the ceremony there will be a reception right out here in the lobby.

But I want to thank you all for coming; we really appreciate your coming here for this special celebration. And let me now introduce Linda's daughter Lisa, who is going to sing a special song in commemoration of this event.

And I remember you when you were this long. But it's good to see you all grown up. Thank you, Lisa.

I don't know if I'm all grown up, but we'll work on that.

First if I can just say a couple of things. One of my favorite artists right now is this fellow named Banksie. And one of my favorite pictures of his, or pieces of artwork of his, says, we don't need another savior, we just need someone to take out the recycling.

So if my mom is in charge of teaching us why and how we need to take out the recycling does that make her even cooler than the savior? It's just something I thought.

I am so proud, I'm so overwhelmed that my mother is a role model for scientists, for women, for cool people everywhere. And this all being said I tried to find something--because most of my repertoire is like, I've killed someone, or my baby's in the ground, or whatever.

Because I think that we do have a huge--and I say we, to echo David Price, that it's the common good. We have a huge task ahead of us, and the environment is something that we need to protect and appreciate and value.

So that being said, I don't have a pitch pipe, but I have a handy camera; hang on, give me a second, talk amongst yourselves.

Oh, I'm sorry. I got it.

This is for you, Mommy.

To dream the impossible dream, to fight the unbeatable foe.

To bear with unbearable sorrow, to run where the brave dare not go.

To right the unrightable wrong, to love pure and chaste from afar.

To try when your arms are too weary, to reach the unreachable star.

This is my quest to follow that star, no matter how hopeless, no matter how far, to fight for the right without question or pause, to be willing to march into hell for that heavenly cause and I know, if I'll only be true to that glorious quest that my heart will lie peaceful and calm till I'm laid to my rest.

And the world will be better for this, that one man scorned and covered with scars, still tried, with his last ounce of courage, to reach the unreachable stars.

[applause]

Now listen to her, okay?

So thank you and let me formally close the ceremony. Congratulate Dr. Birnbaum again, welcome again to the NIEHS. And we'll be having a reception next door in the lobby. Thank you all for coming.

[applause]

[music playing]

[event concluded]