

Vicki Bier: Okay, in the interest of time we'll move on. The next panelist is Bassam Shkhashiri, a professor of chemistry at UW-Madison, another person who knew Denice well and mentored her during her time here, and a nationally recognized leader in science education and outreach.

Bassam Shkhashiri: Thank you Vicki, and good morning everyone. I'm here to celebrate Denice's life. I'm here to only glance in the rearview mirror because I want to look forward to what each one of us, individually and as members of different groups, can do. I've been thinking about why I have something in common with Denice, and I'll get to that in a minute. But I'll tell you what it is right now: discrimination. In less than six weeks I will celebrate the 50th anniversary of my coming to the United States from my native Lebanon. And, you know, with a name like mine, you can understand what I mean when I talk about discrimination.

Denice was a scientist. She was a professor. She was engaged in teaching, research, and service – service locally, service within the state, and service nationally. Science, of course, deals with complexity – despite what the physicists want us to do, to come up with the unified theory of everything – it's not a simple theory. Complexity is what science deals with. The beautiful world that we live in is complex. I want to speak about mentoring, because mentoring is about human relations. Mentoring is complex. Both the person doing the mentoring and the person receiving the mentoring benefit from that process.

I knew Denice very well. I daresay, in the presence of her family, I knew her like I know the back of my hand. But this is not the time to dwell on it. This is the time to think positively about what we must do in our own relationships. Relationships are built on respect, on mutual respect. Relationships are built on respect. And you know you cannot respect someone unless you have self-respect. It's a very important message that I'd like to share with you. Relationships are based on trust. Relationships in mentoring involve responsibilities on both parties. Responsibilities to sustain the relationship, responsibilities to support each other in that relationship, responsibilities to sustain the relationship. It is really a mutual responsibility to sustain the relationship because if one party breaks the relationship, then mentoring ceases. In the process of doing the mentoring that I was engaged in with Denice, I learned a lot. I learned from her that when she was a student at MIT – and perhaps you can corroborate this or say it's not true – she sat in the front row in a class taught by Margaret MacVicar, who I had asked to be chair of my advisory committee when I was at the NSF. And Denice told me that Margaret helped her express herself. Margaret said to her, "Speak up. Let me hear what you're saying." This is the origin of the "assert yourself" thing that I talked about yesterday. "Speak up," she said, "let me hear you. Speak out."

I think it's important as we celebrate that we also include in our celebration and acknowledge the feelings of sadness. Because after all, relationships, if they are true relationships, are ones that include all dimensions of human life. I think it's very important for each one of us to consider ways by which we

can be effective in accomplishing important human goals for ourselves, and for the institutions that we belong to. I'm often asked, as I speak to a variety of groups, especially business groups, I'm often asked the question, "What business are you in, Dr. Shakhashiri?" And I say that I'm in the business of education. And most people nod their heads and say, "yes, that sounds good." But some of them say, "Come on, really, tell me – what business are you in?" And do you know what I tell them? "I'm in the talent development business. That's the business I'm in." And they say, "Is that a for-profit or non-profit?" And I quickly say, "It's for the profit of everyone!" Because that's what the great institutions that we belong to are all about. It's to advance science and to serve society, which is the motto of the American Association for Advancement of Science. It is to advance knowledge and to serve society. And that happens not only because of competitiveness, which is a banner that not only President Shalala and others – including me – talk about and promote, but it really happens because of another C-word: collaboration. Collaboration is the key, or one of the keys, for success. So as I ask you to look forward to what each one of you, each one of us, want to accomplish, we want to be effective, but I ask you to think about in everything that you do, that you be humane, and you be humanitarian.

I said I'd say something about discrimination. If you want to conquer something, you have to understand what it is, and you have to find ways to deal with it. It took me a long time after Denice died to figure out why we had this special connection. Of course – because of discrimination. I didn't realize it at the time, which was okay. The discrimination that I experienced was very different than the discrimination that she experienced. And that's why I say to you, in everything that we do individually and collectively, we must be humane and humanitarian. Thank you.

[Applause]