

NIH MINI-MED SCHOOL
WELCOMING REMARKS

THURSDAY, 7:00 P.M. MARCH 31, 1994
LIPSETT AMPITHEATER

"Most of the fundamental ideas of science are essentially simple, and may, as a rule, be expressed in a language comprehensible to everyone."

This statement, by Albert Einstein, is as true today as it was when he first made it several decades ago. Einstein's comment epitomizes what this program, the NIH Mini-Med School is about -- a way to make science accessible to everyone.

The NIH is committed to promoting public understanding of science. Just taking a quick look at the faculty for this program demonstrates that level of commitment. When you have faculty members that include Directors of NIH Institutes like the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the National Center for Human Genome Research, and other world renowned scientists, not to mention the Director of the NIH itself--you know that we aren't just talking about creating a public that understands--we are working towards it.

I am very pleased to be welcoming you to this program tonight. As someone who has made a career in the sciences, I'm excited that

over the next nine weeks we'll be able to share some of our enthusiasm for science and to show you how enjoyable science can be.

Information from recent studies, including preliminary data from a study that the NIH is supporting, shows that only about 20 percent of Americans have enough knowledge about scientific terms and procedures to understand research that may be crucial to their personal health. Other information that has come out of that study indicates that the majority of Americans get their medical information from television while only 15 percent obtain most of their information from doctors. As we begin this series tonight, we hope to begin to demystify science while providing you with the opportunity to interact directly with members of the biomedical and behavioral community. Like the slogan for this program states, the NIH Mini-Med School is a place "where people and science meet."