

These have been some of the greatest days of my life, and there are many people to thank for it. Thank you Daniel, Hoi-Kwong, and Anton for taking the initiative to do this thing. And thanks to all who made it such a special and memorable event: Most of all Ann Harvey, but also all the others who helped --- Spiros Michalakis, Peter Brooks, Margaret Sanchez, Marcia Brown, and Carol Silberstein.

And I'm very grateful to all of you who traveled far, in both space and time, to be here. There are students from the 1980s, some of whom I have not seen for many years. Students who traveled from Australia, Europe, and Asia. Altogether 30 past and current students are here, and 24 postdocs. I can't say whether you are here because of or despite of how I treated most of you with what could fairly be called benign neglect --- at least it was intended to be benign. I'm very touched that you all took the trouble to be here, as well as all my other friends, colleagues, and family who are here.

Sometimes students ask me for advice about how to have a successful career in science. In my professorial manner I'm always willing to give advice. Yet I rarely reveal my real secret.

My secret has been to be very lucky. Lucky to have a wonderful, loving family --- you've just seen them in action tonight --- including a nearly perfect spouse, wonderful children, my brothers and their kids who are here, we've always been very close. Lucky to be at Caltech, where not only does the sun shine most of the time, but also life is good in other ways most of the time, where I have been surrounded by remarkable, supportive colleagues. Lucky to have terrific students and postdocs who have taught me much more than I could teach them. Lucky to have had many collaborators who have been far smarter than I am, enabling me to do things with them I could never have done on my own in my wildest dreams.

Of the things I have done in my career, one thing stands out as an accomplishment I'm especially proud of: establishing our Institute for Quantum Information, the IQI, which has now expanded to become the IQIM. That, too was lucky. It has not something I planned, and I would not have seized the opportunity if I had not been firmly pushed by Jeff Kimble. The vision behind the IQI has been to create great synergy by bringing together brilliant young people who approach quantum information from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. Beyond planting the seeds I have not had to do much aside from watching with admiration as the flowers bloom. Ann Harvey has been a wonderful partner since the IQI began, as well as Alexei, Leonard, Gil, and Jeff, and we've derived great satisfaction from the success of the people who have passed through the IQI, many of them here tonight.

Lately people sometimes like to tease me about getting older, but I don't really mind. I don't know how others see me, but when I'm surrounded by people much younger than me, brimming over with ideas and enthusiasm, it makes me feel young, too. So ... one last toast, to all my wonderful friends, colleagues, and family. Thanks you all for everything. And ... to being lucky and staying young!

*John Preskill, 15 March 2013*