

**Dr. Lon N. Larson ... introduction by Rick Morrow**

**Students, faculty, alumni, family members, and other distinguished guests. It is a privilege to introduce Dr. Lon N. Larson, the tenth recipient of the Weaver Medal of Honor. It is my intention to remind you of some of Lon's attributes that do not fit neatly into press releases or programmatic descriptions. In doing so, I will address some of the history of Lon's association with Drake, Lon's leadership characteristics, and Lon's profound sense of social justice.**

**While today is about Lon, it is worth noting that there is a word that one hears in the College that can confuse newcomers ... the word is lonenlinda ... Lon and Linda. I have participated at some level in the hiring of most of the people who are faculty and staff in the College. I was solely responsible for hiring only one person. With no one else's input, permission, or blessing, I hired Linda Krypel. I confidently hired her as an instructor without interviewing a single other candidate. I knew she was a respected practitioner, that she would relate extremely well with our students, and that she possessed an insatiable drive to**

**excel. The success of Dr. / Professor Krypel, a nationally recognized academician, deserves our applause.**

## **HISTORY**

**Lon earned his B.S. in pharmacy from Drake in 1972. Upon completing his doctorate at Old Miss, he held positions in the health care industry and at another academic institution before returning to Drake. Speaking of returning to Drake, Dr Larson applied for faculty positions twice. Both times he was our first choice. The first time, Lon was seeking his initial academic appointment. Among the many gracious things that he said, was “This just isn’t the right time for me to come to Drake.” As we watched Lon’s academic career blossom at the University of Arizona, many of us questioned whether there ever would be a right time for Lon to come to Drake. Little did any of us know that the factor that would accelerate Lon’s return was in our midst. Linda Krypel renewed her acquaintance with Lon at a national pharmacy meeting. As they became closer friends, the time for Lon to come to Drake, perhaps not so coincidentally, came into being.**

## **LEADERSHIP**

**It is somewhat incongruous to link Lon with the titles and ostentatious trappings traditionally associated with leadership. To my knowledge, Lon has never sought the presidency of any pharmacy organization. He has not been a candidate for a deanship or even for a departmental chair. Certainly he has chaired many important programs and committees but I suspect that Lon was drafted for a high percentage of these. I remember Boyd Granberg saying that he (Boyd) had never actively sought any of the things for which he was most known. I suspect, that the same can be said about Lon.**

**Unquestionably, Lon provides extensive, valuable, and timely service to his profession, College, University, and community. Most often working somewhere below the highest hierarchical level, Lon personifies the concept of servant-leader. In this role, Lon has been our advocate, our respectful opponent, our catalyst, our mentor, and our conscience. Recently, Lon addressed student leaders on campus. For me, the overriding message of all five parts of his presentation, the**

one admonition which all leaders must embrace ... “Do not be afraid.” Lon is a fearless leader.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Lon’s belief in social justice is quite Iowa-like. It precludes any hint of entitlement. As an example, Lon has frequently railed against the injustice of senior citizens’ discounts. His contention is that such discounts represent age discrimination.

One memorable weekend Lon and Linda, there’s that word, and my wife Sherry and I, dedicated our selves to attending art shows and art museums in Kansas City and Topeka. This trip involved an overnight stay. I had just turned 50 and flashed my AARP card as we checked out of the hotel. As we drove away I gloatingly asked Lon what he had paid. To my surprise and delight, the clerk had given Lon the same discount. I say “delight” because I could barely wait to get back to Drake and to tell Darrel and Chuck and others about how Lon had accepted a senior citizens’ discount. Lon took the wind out of my sails by reminding me that I was no more entitled to that discount than he was. In other words, social justice had prevailed.

**It could be said that receiving the Weaver Medal of Honor validates the career of Professor Larson. I won't say that because Lon does nothing for the sake of validation. Rather, he resolutely recognizes his professional roles and obligations as covenants ... the covenants that give purpose to his career and meaning to his life.**

**Please join me in welcoming our colleague and our friend, Dr. Lon Larson, to the podium.**