

Michael Ortiz of the California Institute of Technology among Scientists, Artists, Civic, Corporate and Philanthropic Leaders Inducted into American Academy

CAMBRIDGE, MA - Michael Ortiz, Dotty and Dick Hayman Professor of Aeronautics and Mechanical Engineering at the California Institute of Technology will be inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences at a ceremony here on Saturday, October 6. The program to officially welcome the Academy's 227th class of Fellows celebrates superior scholarship, artistic triumphs and exemplary service to society.

Founded in 1780, the Academy honors excellence each year by electing to membership the finest minds and most influential leaders of the day. Among this year's new members are former Vice President Albert Gore, Jr.; former Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; New York Mayor and businessman Michael Bloomberg; Google Chairman and CEO Eric Schmidt; New York Times investigative correspondent James Risen; filmmaker Spike Lee; acclaimed chef, activist and cookbook author Alice Waters; Pixar Chief Creative Officer John Lasseter.

Six members of the newly elected class will address their colleagues at the induction ceremony at Harvard University's Sanders Theatre: MIT robotics professor and co founder of the iRobot Corporation Rodney Brooks; Princeton University molecular biologist Bonnie Bassler; civil rights champion and University of California, Berkeley, law school dean Christopher Edley, Jr.; American opera singer and solo recitalist Jessye Norman; prize-winning architect Billie Tsien; and mathematician and University of Chicago President Robert J. Zimmer.

"The induction ceremony is an opportunity to welcome new members and celebrate the extraordinary history of the organization, now in its third century of service to the nation," said Chief Executive Officer Leslie Berlowitz. "The Academy both honors excellence by electing members to its fellowship and draws on that distinguished membership to address critical social and intellectual issues. It does so through studies, publications, meetings and symposia."

The 202 new Fellows and 23 new Foreign Honorary Members are leaders in scholarship, business, the arts and public affairs. They come from 27 states and 12 countries, and range in age from 36 to 92. They represent dozens of universities, corporations, museums, research institutes, media outlets and foundations, and include seven university presidents or chancellors; winners of Nobel and Pulitzer prizes, and Academy Awards; and two former chairs of the President's Council of Economic Advisors.

Other new Fellows are: economists Gregory Mankiw and Murray Weidenbaum; supercomputer expert David Shaw; Grammy-winning pianist Emanuel Ax; historian Nell Painter; classicist Sabine MacCormack; and international public health leader Allan Rosenfield.

This year's new Foreign Honorary Members come from Europe, Asia, Canada, and the Middle East, and include Italian glassblower Lino Tagliapietra; Israeli biochemist and Nobel laureate Avram Hershko; French literary scholar Tzvetan Todorov; Pritzker Prize-winning Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas; and Canadian Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella. A complete list of new members is available on the Academy's website at: www.amacad.org

"The Academy takes great pride in honoring the accomplishments of these outstanding and influential individuals," said Academy President Emilio Bizzi. "Throughout its history, Fellows of the Academy have been dedicated to advancing intellectual thought and constructive action in America and the world. We are confident that our newest group of Fellows will help us fulfill that mission in significant ways."

On Saturday, new members will learn about the Academy's wide-ranging research program. Current Fellows will discuss some of the Academy's ongoing projects, which include such topics as the state of the humanities, the independence of the American judiciary, the future of the Internet, nuclear proliferation, the future of the media, and universal education. New members also will learn about the Academy's Visiting Scholars Program, which mentors the next generation of scholars and thinkers.

New Fellows and Honorary Foreign Members are nominated and elected by current members of the Academy. Members are divided into five broad classes: mathematics and physical sciences; biological sciences; social sciences; humanities and the arts; and public affairs, business and administration.

Founded in 1780, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences is an independent research center that conducts multidisciplinary studies of complex and emerging problems. Current Academy research focuses on: science, technology, and global security; social policy and American Institutions; the humanities and culture; and education. With headquarters in Cambridge, Mass., the Academy's work is advanced by its 4,600 elected members, who are leaders in the academic disciplines, the arts, business and public affairs from around the world. (www.amacad.org)

NOTE TO EDITORS: The American Academy of Arts and Sciences induction ceremony will take place at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 6, 2007, at Sanders Theatre in Cambridge. Those wishing to attend are asked to contact Paul Karoff at 617-576-5043 or pkaroff@amacad.org.

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