

I wanted to start by saying that I can't thank you enough for this award. I have received, at this point in my career, a fair number of scientific awards, and none of them were as meaningful to me as this Legacy Award.

I say this because my roots in this city are deep ones. I was born and educated in Calgary and Alberta as were all of my siblings and both of my parents. I grew up in Montgomery and Bowness, the eldest of 6 children in a loving and hard-working family, but one where no-one had finished high school. If you had asked me what a scientist was when I was growing-up, I could only have told you that they worked in places like universities and "discovered" things. It is one hundred percent thanks to the Calgary Public School system that I not only learned what scientists were, but ultimately became one.

In particular, it is thanks to the Calgary Public School system that I received an amazing education not only in elementary school, but also in junior high when I was lucky enough to be selected for one of the first classes of "gifted children" as they were called at the time. It was thanks to the Calgary school system that I learned to love science - two of my teachers at Bowness High School took the time to introduce me to the excitement of science and to encourage me to think about pursuing science rather than becoming a writer, which I had vaguely imagined I might be. And it was the Calgary Public school system that allowed me to excel to the point where I could win the scholarships that were necessary for me to go to university.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that the second major reason I'm standing here today is because of my loving, supportive and amazing family, many of whom have joined me here today.

I think it's clear that I owe a tremendous debt to the Calgary Public school system, and in some ways I feel like I should be giving an award to all of you and to all of the teachers who work so hard to ensure that every child has the opportunity to excel, regardless of their background or family's income bracket. And in that regard, my biggest hope for the future is that I can give back and help other children like I was to obtain a similarly wonderful education, and in so doing find their dreams as I found mine.