

Reflection

Dr. P. Thomas Carroll was definitely an interesting person to meet. It was amazing how one simple question could set him talking for 20 minutes at a time, but that just added to his charm. In fact, we ran over time and were forced to cut him off, unfortunately. What surprised me the most about him was how he was just basically a normal guy. From how he described his youth and college and beyond, he never seemed overly full of himself or eccentric, but pretty normal. From all we had seen of his accomplishments and intelligence, I definitely did not just expect to see someone who could converse so easily and well, with interesting opinions and thoughts.

It astounded me how he connected so many different aspects of academia, and combined them into success. He has won so many awards and honors in his life, yet he never seems to have been aiming for them, but only pursuing what he loved; the things he won were simply side benefits, and sometimes just annoyances. This mentality is the mark of a true genius in any given field.

As he spoke of all the scientific ground he had covered, I gained a true appreciation for how much work he had put into his efforts. Having worked on original research myself, previously, I know how much of a time commitment it was for that relatively small amount of experimentation. Though most of his research involved reading through and learning from original sources, rather than actual experimentation in a lab, it probably involved work even more dreary and taxing than that in a lab, and must have taken great determination and passion to pursue so purposefully.

Also, it says something about him that the accomplishment he felt most proud about was an article he co-authored in a prominent scientific journal. He has won many awards such as the *Outstanding Young Men of America*, and been put in the book *Who's Who in Technology Today*, but all these awards to him were nothing, as he modestly described how he had not put much effort into attaining them. However, the article he co-wrote, he put a huge amount of hours into researching and writing, so when it was published, he felt proud of it.

As he told his life story, he both informed and inspired me. Left with a bad feeling about research after my own experiences in high school, I had thought to not go anywhere near it ever again. However, after listening to Dr. Carroll speak about his experiences researching, and the feeling one gets from discovering new things not known, my opinion of research has changed, he has inspired me to give research another try and pursue it again in college and beyond. Also, he has given me another perspective on the idea of history. Always a hated subject of mine in high school, he spoke of it in a way that intrigued me, history was no longer a bunch of memorization but now a story. Overall, I was glad to have the experience to speak to Dr. Carroll and hear his view on various subjects. Though skeptical of this Dudley Observatory project in the beginning, I now occur that it is a great project for future classes to do, as it is both interesting, educational, and inspiring.