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Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory Announcement

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Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on October 16, 2017

Location: Goldstein Auditorium, Schine Student Center

Remarks: Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory
Announcement

*The Chancellor was introduced by Vice Chancellor and Provost
Michele Wheatly.*

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to a golden day of awe and wonder.

This is a happy day for our gravitational waves team, for our Physics Department, for our College of Arts and Sciences, for the whole of Syracuse University, and for everyone on earth who cares about discovery and the advance of human knowledge.

I am so proud to be with you at Syracuse University, at this global research university, to join in honoring our faculty, staff and students who have contributed so much to this great discovery. They have brought distinction to themselves and their university, and we all are grateful.

I thank first the physicists in the College of Arts and Sciences, and particularly professors Peter Saulson, Duncan Brown, and Stefan Ballmer.

I thank the members of the Physics Department's Gravitational Waves Research Group – more than two dozen students, research staff, and faculty who have come here from all over the world.

Of the more than 50 colleges and universities around the world who have partnered in gravitational waves work, Syracuse University is proud to have one of the largest, longest standing, most diverse, and most impactful.

I thank the members of staff in Information Technology Services for helping with computing power and infrastructure support for the worldwide team.

I thank the leaders of our college of Arts and Sciences, both in the Physics Department and in the Dean's Office. They had the foresight and the patience to support gravitational waves research for 60 years.

Last year, on February 11, 2016, we were in this same space, Goldstein Auditorium in the Schine Student Center, to participate in the worldwide announcement that the existence of gravitational waves had been confirmed for the first time, and confirmed by Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) measuring the collision of two black holes.

Students, faculty, and staff from Syracuse played major roles in that now Nobel prize-winning discovery. Students, faculty, and staff, presented here on February 11, 2016, and the broadcast was watched all over the world. They answered our questions that day.

I think I remember the questions well. One of them was this: Now that you have discovered, for the first time in millennia, a totally new scientific way to observe the universe, what do you expect to discover?

Another question, from Professor Sam Gorovitz, was, I think this: What are the implications for this discovery for fields other than physics?

On February 11, 2016, Professor Duncan Brown answered those questions, and what he basically said was this: "We don't know what gravitational waves will enable us to observe – but we know it will be full of wonders, and will have implications way beyond physics and astronomy."

Today, twenty months later on October 16, 2017, Duncan Brown has been proved right. Today is a golden moment for many sciences, including

chemistry, materials science, and engineering. It is also a golden moment for the pursuit of knowledge and wonder at this great research university, Syracuse University.

Thank you to everyone who made today happen.

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