

Technion awarded honorary doctorates to eight distinguished men and women

Dr. George Elbaum, USA; Prof. Harry B. Gray, USA; Kenneth Levy, USA; Robert and Ruth Magid, Australia; Irith Rappaport, Israel; Prof. Daniel Zajfman, Israel; Prof. Anton Zeilinger, Austria

Eight distinguished individuals received honorary doctorates in a festive ceremony – the first in almost three years due to the COVID-19 pandemic – that took place during the annual Technion Board of Governors meeting. The ceremony was held in the presence of Technion President Professor Uri Sivan, Chairman of the Council Mr. Gideon Frank, Chairman of the Board of Governors Mr. Scott Leemaster, members of the Technion senior management, and Faculty deans.

Professor Wayne Kaplan acted as Master of Ceremonies and welcomed guests and honorees.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett sent a [video message](#) congratulating the honorary doctorate recipients. He said the Technion is Israel's powerhouse of technology, and one of the most prestigious institutes in Israel, having produced four out of five Israeli Nobel prize laureates in the sciences. Prime Minister Bennett, who has a very personal connection to Haifa and the Technion – his father worked at the Technion, and he grew up in Haifa, also called the Technion a “beautiful model of coexistence – with Jews, Arabs, orthodox and secular students all coming together in the pursuit of excellence.” He finished by wishing everyone a wonderful evening and many more years of success.

In his welcoming remarks, **Technion President Prof. Uri Sivan** began by asking the question of how we should define a university. The university, he said, is the total sum of all those who chose to align themselves with its mission as a means of living their values. From the Technion's founding fathers; to its faculty, students, and administrative staff. From its direct supporters to those who shake the world with which the university interacts. “Each of our honorees here tonight has aligned themselves with Technion's mission and dedicated themselves in service of others. Congratulations to each of you – may you continue to bask in the glory of your meaningful, heartfelt lifelong contributions and derive an endless sense of meaning and joy from your pursuits.”

Scott Leemaster, Chairman of Board of Governors shared his delight about being back with the Technion family after three tumultuous years. “Technion is the leader today thanks to visionaries who have steered it in the last hundred years.” He paid tribute to Uri Sivan, the 17th president of Technion who has led it through the many challenges of the last few years, putting his heart and soul into this work and shaping the university into an institution of excellence. Mr. Leemaster added that the honorees championed the Technion's values in research and they now joined the ranks of Einstein, Churchill, and other luminaries. He emphasized how important science and innovation were for a sustainable future – and to ensure that the next generations will have access to clean air and water, food, and a stable environment. He thanked the students for “showing us excellence and inspiring us.”

Here are the citations for all of the Honorary Doctorate recipients:

Dr. George Elbaum

In honor of your passion for the Technion and its role in keeping Israel safe and bettering mankind; with admiration for your commitment to influencing today's youth by telling your story as a Holocaust survivor; in gratitude for your tireless leadership on the local, national, and international levels; and in thankfulness for your generous support of energy research and student programs at the Technion.

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Kenneth Levy

For your continuous support of the Technion, its mission and its students; in recognition of your success as an international business leader; in gratitude for your contributions to the Israeli economy through the establishment of several internationally recognized high-technology companies; in admiration of your undying commitment to the Jewish people, to science and to humankind by providing the spark for transformative innovations and scientific advancements.

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Irith Rappaport

For continuing the philanthropic efforts of your parents in supporting transformative biomedical research and education; in recognition of your steadfast dedication to empowering women and for your commitment to the arts; in gratitude for your devotion to the Technion and the Ruth and Bruce Rappaport Faculty of Medicine.

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Professor Anton Zeilinger

In recognition of your seminal contributions to quantum science and technology; and in appreciation of your dedication to attracting young people to the field; and in tribute to your efforts in envisioning science as a platform to enrich the human spirit; and for uniting the Israeli and European academic communities on the path to scientific achievement.

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Professor Harry B. Gray

In recognition of your extraordinary contributions that raised worldwide awareness of research and development of solar energy utilization; and in gratitude for your outstanding support and guidance to the Technion and the Israeli academic community.

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Robert (Bob) and Ruth Magid

In recognition of your joint support of Jewish communities in Australia, Israel, and around the world; in gratitude for your relentless efforts to promote the Technion and its scientific pursuits; in tribute to your success and accomplishments as business leaders and in appreciation of your selfless commitment to philanthropic causes and advocacy efforts.

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Professor Daniel Zajfman

In recognition of your success at the helm of the Weizmann Institute of Science and for leading the way to impressive scientific achievements here in Israel and across the globe; in appreciation of your dedication to advancing science and promoting its accessibility on an international scale; and in deep gratitude for promoting collaborations between the Technion and the Weizmann Institute of Science in many significant areas of research.

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Speaking on behalf of all the honorees, Prof. Harry Gray responded that he was “honored to be in your graduating class.” He acknowledged Albert Einstein’s enormous impact on Israel and the Technion, and his statement made 100 years ago that “Israel must develop technology to exist and survive.” Now Israel is the world capital of technology. This has been largely due to the Technion family who had gone out and started companies all over Israel.

Prof. Gray emphasized that the job isn’t finished, and said there are three crises on the planet that need to be tackled: human health, energy, and environment. The Board of Governors should support the Technion’s efforts in these areas, and Prof. Gray said he was very encouraged by the new Center for Sustainable Processes and Catalysis led by Distinguished Professor Ilan Marek. Prof. Gray finished on a personal note by saying, “Shirley and I came here 43 years ago with our family. We love this place. It’s been so good to us. We can’t thank you enough for what you’ve done for our family and for enriching our lives. With this honorary degree, there’s no way you’ll ever get rid of me now!”

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1. The laureates with the President of Technion. From left: Prof. Anton Zeilinger, Prof. Daniel Zajfman, Robert Magid, Technion President Prof. Uri Sivan, Irith Rappaport, Prof. Harry B. Gray, Kenneth Levy, Dr. George Elbaum and Ruth Magid
2. Prof. Uri Sivan (right) and Executive VP for Research Koby Rubinstein (left) conferring the degree on Prof. Anton Zeilinger
3. Technion President Prof. Uri Sivan and Senior Executive VP Prof. Oded Rabinovitch (left) conferring the degree on Prof. Harry B. Gray
4. Technion President Prof. Uri Sivan and Senior Executive VP Prof. Oded Rabinovitch (left) conferring the degree on Dr. George Elbaum
5. Technion President Uri Sivan and VP for Academic Affairs Professor Shimon Marom (left) conferring the degree on Robert and Ruth Magid
6. Technion President Prof. Uri Sivan and VP for Academic Affairs Professor Shimon Marom (left) conferring the degree on Irith Rappaport
7. Technion President Prof. Uri Sivan (left) and Head of Technion Graduate Studies School School Prof. Dan Givoli (left) conferring the degree on Kenneth Levy
8. Technion President Prof. Uri Sivan and Executive VP for Research Professor Koby Rubinstein (left) conferring the degree on Prof. Daniel Zajfman
9. Technion President Prof. Uri Sivan
10. Chairman of the Board of Governors Mr. Scott Leemaster
11. From left to right: Prof. Wayne Kaplan from Department of Materials Science and Engineering, Chairman of the Board of Governors Mr. Scott Leemaster, Technion President Prof. Uri Sivan, Chairman of the Council Mr. Gideon Frank, Senior

Executive VP Prof. Oded Rabinovitch, VP for Academic Affairs Professor Shimon Marom, VP for Research Professor Koby Rubinstein and Head of Technion Graduate Studies School Prof. Dan Givoli

Photo Credit: Nitzan Zohar, Technion Spokesperson's Office

For more information: Doron Shaham, Technion Spokesperson – 050-3109088