



Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton addresses the conference plenary.

## Exploring New Frontiers in Rochester

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**M**ore than 1,500 people attended Frontiers in Optics, OSA's 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, in Rochester, N.Y., in October. Attendance was significantly higher than at last year's annual meeting, when participants totalled 1,300. The number of exhibitors this year, 91, was double that of 2003.

Highlights of the program included: a keynote address by Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton; talks by three Nobel Prize winners; a symposium on optics in Renaissance art; networking events; and the festivities surrounding the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University of Rochester's Institute of Optics. The technical sessions generated an enthusiastic response, with standing-room only crowds at talks on micro- and nano-optics, novel optical devices, photonic crystals and photonic crystal devices.

### The plenary sessions

Sen. Clinton's address at the Monday afternoon plenary was the focus of much anticipation and enthusiasm. The senator was welcomed to the hall by an audience numbering over 1,200, who gave her a standing ovation. Her address cen-

tered on the importance of optics in the state of New York, as well as on the role the optics community plays in scientific innovation on a global scale. Clinton chastised the Bush administration for what she termed an "assault on science research and education," joking at one point that the administration "has turned Washington into an evidence-free zone." In a serious vein, she encouraged the annual meeting attendees to advocate for increased government support for science research and education. "I am troubled by the ongoing suppression of science research by the current administration and I encourage everyone to speak up for advocacy of science," Clinton said. "Supporting research and development in this industry needs to be a priority."

In a separate keynote session, Steven Chu, William Phillips and Claude Cohen-Tannoudji, the recipients of the 1997 Nobel Prize in physics, were recognized as OSA's newest Honorary Members. Each spoke of what receiving the prize had meant for him on a personal and professional level. Their talks were followed by a panel discussion

moderated by OSA President Peter Knight. "I'm often asked by students how you win a Nobel Prize, but that's not the right question," said Chu in his remarks. "You should be asking what really interests you because working on something you enjoy is what drives you forward to making important discoveries."

### Optics in Renaissance art

Another highlight of the meeting was the symposium on optics in Renaissance art. The four-hour event featured presentations by a number of authorities, including Charles Falco and David Stork, central players in the ongoing debate over whether some of the Old Masters used optical aids. At times the conversa-



Optics in Renaissance art was the topic of an evening symposium.

tion became heated, with many in attendance coming down strongly on one side or the other of the controversy. A number of those present took the position that their appreciation of the genius of the Old Masters would not be in any way compromised by the revelation that some of them had relied on lenses, mirrors or other optical aids. "If I learned tomorrow that Leonardo da Vinci used projection methods to help in painting the Mona Lisa, I would still hold him in very high esteem," commented for example University of Rochester professor Robert Boyd, an annual meeting co-chair.



OSA's newest Honorary Members. (Left to right) Claude Cohen-Tannoudji, William Phillips and Steven Chu speak in a session moderated by OSA President Peter Knight on what receiving the Nobel Prize has meant to them on a personal and professional level.

### OSA members-only reception

A members-only reception, a first for an OSA annual meeting, was attended by approximately 500 people. OSA gave free t-shirts to the attendees, who dined buffet style at a meal provided by the

Society. According to OSA Membership Director Aimee Gibbons, the event was designed to recognize and appreciate OSA members. OSA President Peter Knight toasted those present, saying, "It is you OSA members whom we celebrate

tonight. Lift your glasses to OSA and the amazing legacy of our membership!"

### Student leadership

OSA's annual meeting has always been an important forum for the Society's student leaders. An international student leadership meeting this year drew over 50 attendees from around the world.

The event was structured to give the students insights into OSA's leadership and provide them with an opportunity to network with other student leaders and OSA volunteers. The student leadership meeting provided officers of student chapters the opportunity to brainstorm ideas for events, promotions and educational activities.

*Plans for Frontiers in Optics 2005, to be held Oct. 16-20 in Tucson, Ariz., are already underway. The call for papers will open in January. Visit [www.osa.org/meetings/annual/](http://www.osa.org/meetings/annual/).*

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