

**CEREMONIE DE REMISE DES
PALMES ACADEMIQUES**

**Professor Ares Rosakis
September 12, 2013**

Madame la consule générale, chère Elisabeth

Cher Professeur Stolper,

Cher Professeur Elachi,

Cher Professeur Rosakis,

Chère Mme Ioanna Dimitracopoulou-Rosakis

Dear Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm very pleased and honored to be with you today to present the insignia of *Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Palmes académiques* to Professor Ares Rosakis.

I would like to particularly thank Professors Stolper and Elachi for hosting this ceremony in such a distinguished location.

I would like to convey Mr Jean-Yves Le Gall's, President of CNES, the French Space agency, deepest regrets not to be able to be with us tonight. He was requested by the President of France, Mr. François Hollande to meet with him today. He is now en route, and will visit Caltech and JPL tomorrow.

Dear Professor Rosakis,

Your academic career and the way you conduct your research are remarkable and you are playing – and I hope, you will keep on playing - a tremendous role in fostering strong scientific collaboration between the United States and France.

Your career is truly impressive. You joined the Caltech community as an assistant professor in 1982 and became a full professor in 1993. You were, among others, the fifth Director of GALCIT between 2004 and 2009. In 2011, you were awarded the position of Theodore Von Karman Professor of Aeronautics and professor of Mechanical Engineering.

This year, you were honored as the inaugural recipient of the Otis Booth Leadership Chair, Division of Engineering and Applied Science.

You preside over the largest of the six academic divisions at Caltech, with more than a third of the Institute's faculty and forty percent of the entire student and postdoctoral fellow population. The Engineering and Applied Science division is an elite organization that has been highly ranked by both U.S. and international bodies.

Your multiple – and once again impressive - achievements have duly been recognized by your peers through numerous awards from the 1989 Rudolf Kingslake Medal and Prize from

the International Society of Optical Engineering, to your election as a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts in 2013.

Beyond the awards, the words of your friends and colleagues are also an impressive homage. They describe a man with boundless energy and drive, creative and passionate, open to new ideas, willing to take risks, and bringing people together to pursue new ideas and projects.

But tonight, we do not only award the Professor, we thank the man. Nous ne décorons pas seulement l'homme de science, nous remercions l'honnête homme.

We thank the man who has put his life under the sign of a double culture, works so hard for a strong Europe-US relationship, and who has understood that the world of tomorrow needs those bridges, not only between countries, but between continents and cultures, and that the seeds of science needed cross fertilization to grow and bear fruits.

I am under the impression that you have – with relentless energy - worked and succeeded in putting your whole life under this sign of double culture and exchange, from very early on.

As a student, you went to Oxford, with a major in engineering science, and obtained your PhD

in an American University, Brown – a university close to my heart and I know to other distinguished guests here tonight.

As an international academic, you have delivered lectures at major research centers worldwide and are very active at national and international committees. For instance, you were a Visiting Professor at the Department *Terre-Atmosphère-Océan*, of *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris in 2005.

As a man, you demonstrate how important it is to keep strong roots, strong links with one's culture and strong ties with special places, for you the island of Serifos were you go every summer. It is indeed important to know where

you come from, if you want to travel far and away. It is important to first have a closely knit family if you want then to face the challenges of the world or science.

And I think your family does share this ideal and those values. Of course your wife Ionna, but also your whole exceptional family: your stepdaughter, Angele, an archeologist who graduated in the US and who plans to work in Greece; your stepson, Philip, who after graduating from Princeton, plans to work in London; and your younger son, Alexandros, who is following in his father's footsteps, as a student at Brown University.

As father and son, you both you attended the
2013 Society for Experimental Mechanics
Annual Conference together last June.

France is indeed very lucky - and thankful – that you helped fostering strong connections with her. Indeed, you are one of the pillars of the scientific relationship between France and the United States.

More recently, you were instrumental in the signing of a new agreement for a Master's Educational Exchange Program between Caltech and *Ecole Polytechnique*. This agreement is now opening the way for the creation of a new laboratory for CNES/Polytechnique and JPL/Caltech, and I think really bring something new and useful to research and development.

Your efforts have been crucial to transatlantic cooperation in space and aeronautics between CNES and NASA. You advocated, in particular, for earth observation programs in collaboration with NASA.

By collaborating with French scientists and by working closely with CNES and the Embassy of France in the United States, you have shaped and strengthened Franco-American connections and, more importantly, the friendship between our two countries.

Dear Professor Rosakis,

It is only justice that France recognizes not only your achievements, but also your person, and your crucial role in bringing the United States and France always closer together.

It is my great institutional honour and personal pleasure to thank you, and to commend you, by bestowing upon you the *Palmes académiques*.

Monsieur le Professeur Arès Rosakis,

*Au nom du Ministre de l'Éducation Nationale
et en vertu des pouvoirs qui me sont conférés,
je vous fais Commandeur dans l'Ordre des
Palmes académiques.*