

Caltech Associates Offer an Evening with a Nobel Laureate

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In the penthouse at the Regency Club in Los Angeles, sixty-two guests and members of the Associates of the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) joined together to spend an evening with Nobel laureate Dr. Robert H. Grubbs, the Victor and Elizabeth Atkins Professor of Chemistry.

Grubbs, a professor at Caltech, received a Nobel Prize in 2005 for his research on an organic reaction called Olefin Metathesis, in which atoms in a compound are replaced with atoms from another compound. His creation of catalysts for this reaction resulted in custom-built molecules with specialized properties that can create new products and better pharmaceuticals.

The catalysts allow for "environmentally friendly chemistry" by creating fewer wastes and replacing the use of petroleum in the creation of many products. The catalysts have applications in a broad array of applications. For example, they are used in many biomedical applications, such as nanoparticle technology for cancer drugs, and medicines for hepatitis and osteoporosis.

Interestingly enough, insect pheromone production is another outcome of the catalyst Grubbs and his Associates created. The pheromones are used to confuse the insects so that they cannot mate or cannot share information with other insects. This makes it possible to spray nontoxic pheromones over crops instead of spraying harmful pesticides.

The catalyst that Grubbs and his Associates created has also enabled the creation of a new type of plastic that is so durable it is being used to create baseball bats out of poor pieces of wood, bathroom fixtures in Japan, and panels on John Deere combines.

The Caltech Associates has been providing its members for decades with exclusive opportunities to learn about the groundbreaking research being performed by the faculty at Caltech. Recently, the Associates has expanded to the Westside to allow its members living in the western part of Los Angeles the chance to enjoy these opportunities closer to home.

"We are very excited to bring Caltech's brilliant researchers to West LA and give our community the opportunity to converse with the brightest minds in the world," said Elizabeth Tito, a Caltech Associates board of directors' member and resident of Pacific Palisades. "The Caltech Associates bring to our community a program that introduces us to cutting-edge scientific research and provides a fabulous venue to meet and make new friends with a similar passion for intellectual pursuit."

The Associates of the
California Institute of Technology

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About the Associates: Founded in 1926, the Associates is a support organization for the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) with over 1,450 members throughout the United States and abroad - a diverse cross section of members of the local & business community, Caltech alumni and faculty, and philanthropists. To learn more about the Caltech Associates, events in West LA and the programs provided to members please visit associates.caltech.edu/ or contact at 626-395-3919.

[You can find this press release here](#)