



J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Committee

J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Lecture for 2020 and 2021

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, our 2020 speaker, Nobel Prize winner Jennifer Doudna, understandably had to cancel, and discussions with potential 2021 speakers are fraught with the same issues. In the meantime, we are exploring online formats and assessing their potential to reach our core audience and even expand our reach. We will keep you posted both on our website and in subsequent newsletters.

Support the J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Committee—Especially Our Outstanding Scholars!

As you will recall from days gone by, the Oppenheimer Committee's two major purposes are presenting an outstanding speaker to the community each summer, and supporting exceptional graduating high school students in Los Alamos, Pojoaque, and Santa Fe. The speaker honors Oppenheimer by carrying on his legacy of intellectual brilliance and humanitarian sensitivity; the student scholarships aim to further the education of scholars who have his love of knowledge.

The Committee itself (all volunteer), numerous financial institutions, and donors who want to honor a specific area of scholarship provide a base for our awards. But we also count on many community donors who share our values. So, we are now asking at this end-of-year time for you to generously support these remarkable students.

We are sorry that the pandemic has recently prevented us from presenting speakers, but our student scholarship program continues as strong as before (and as needed). We have many worthy students in Los Alamos and in high schools in the surrounding area that we want to support.

The JROMC is a 501(c)(3) organization that relies solely on contributions for funding its activities. To support the JROMC scholarships and lectures, please use the form on page 3 with the enclosed envelope already addressed to the JROMC. For more information about the Committee and its activities, visit www.jromc.org

Two Past JROMC Winners: What Are They Doing Now?

Po-Ching Chen—2000 JRO Scholarship Winner

I'm often asked what growing up in Los Alamos was like. After some trial and error, I ultimately settled on describing it as growing up in a close-knit, small-town community where every young person was nonetheless encouraged to see the big wide world out there and go do something.

This also happens to describe how receiving the J. Robert Oppenheimer scholarship twenty (!!) years ago made an impact on my life. I remember the complex feelings I had when I received the award all those years ago – elation, gratitude, speechlessness. But mostly, I remember feeling the scholarship itself was telling me something important: that I had managed to distinguish myself in our small community, but it was now time to leave and swing for the fences.

It encouraged me to stretch, take risks, struggle - all of which I did and continue to do. The scholarship provided financial support, yes, but more than that, it encouraged me to make more challenging choices. I'm grateful that I listened, as those choices shaped me into who I am today.

It was the reason that my first job out of college (despite graduating with a degree in chemistry) was at Teach for America. It was the reason that I left a promising career in international trade law and policy to lead a small non-profit serving abused and vulnerable children and their families. (Please consider being involved in your local and regional CASA programs!) It's also the reason why I've returned to Los Alamos to work at LANL on government transparency.

I'll be honest. So much change has not been easy, but alongside the difficulty have been unsurpassed moments of fulfillment. I am beyond grateful to have the honor and privilege. Thank you.

Dominic Roybal—2017 Scholarship Winner of the Norris E. Bradbury (Pojoaque) Scholarship

I am a 2017 graduate of Pojoaque Valley High School. My first four semesters of my post-secondary education were obtained at New Mexico Tech. I enjoyed my classes and time at NM Tech; however, I am a very social person and thus found I was not in the right environment. Thanks to the generosity of the J. Robert Oppenheimer Scholarship, I was able to afford to

transfer to New Mexico State University where I plan to graduate with two degrees: Mechanical Engineering and Business Administration. I am currently employed as a student at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. I plan to apply for a full-time position within LANL after I graduate. I plan to pursue my Master's Degree upon completion of my undergraduate studies while being employed at LANL

A Few 2020 JROMC Scholarship Winners: What Are They Doing?

Sarah Crotzer—2020 Winner of the New Mexico Consortium Scholarship

I am still planning to attend New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, but of course, everything is still up in the air. As you can imagine, information from New Mexico Tech changes weekly. I plan to live on-campus, and I have a single dorm room, since only single dorm rooms are allowed. The environment on campus will be quite a bit different than “normal.” Some of my classes, such as labs, will be in-person, and other classes will be online. I am a bit nervous about attending college in the midst of a pandemic and the necessary social distancing requirements that might make it hard to make friends, but I am super excited to continue my education, and I am very grateful for the financial contribution from the J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Committee that has enabled me to do so.

Talia Ben-Naim—2020 Winner of J. Robert Oppenheimer Scholarship in Memory of Mary and Harold Argo

This fall, my plan is to study biomedical engineering at Northwestern University. My goal is to obtain a PhD and become an engineer. I hope to make a positive impact on the world by advancing medical research. This scholarship will help me to focus on my studies and goals without having to be concerned about finances. Thank you for this award.

Lillian Petersen—2020 Winner of J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Scholarship

I am excited to attend Harvard in the fall where I will be pursuing Applied Math applied to Molecular Biology. I am eager to live in Boston, explore new fields, continue research, and join clubs! I am grateful to the J. Robert Oppenheimer Committee for their generous scholarship that will allow me to maximize my educational opportunities by reducing monetary concerns.

Online Resources about J. Robert Oppenheimer

If in this age of pandemic lock-downs you find yourself with a little more time than you had before, we want to share some easily accessible materials about J. Robert Oppenheimer. Here are a few suggestions.

2018 JRO Memorial Lecture on YouTube - View the 2018 lecture given by Dr. J. Michael Kosterlitz: “A Random Walk through Physics to the Nobel Prize.”

JRO's Quotation, “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” To learn more about this 1965 television interview in which Oppenheimer recalled his reaction to the Trinity test, go first on YouTube to “*J. Robert Oppenheimer: “I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.”*” This 54-second clip includes the quotation from Hindu scripture. This has had over 9.2 million views since it was posted in 2011.

Then check YouTube for an interesting piece entitled “*What Was Oppenheimer Thinking? Body Language behind the Facade.*” This analysis from 2019 looks at JRO's facial cues during that brief interview that hint at the profound spiritual depths of this man.

For more about the Hindu scripture, check the website http://www.faktoider.nu/oppenheimer_eng.html. It looks at the context of Oppenheimer's reaction to the Bhagavid Gita.

For more eye-witness accounts from Oppenheimer's team, including Luis W. Alvarez, Enrico Fermi, Kenneth Greisen, Edwin M. McMillan, Philip Morrison, Robert Serber, Maurice M. Shapiro, Cyril S. Smith, and Victor Weisskopf, check <http://www.dannen.com/decision/trin-eye.html>. Oppenheimer and his talented group changed the world with this terrifying accomplishment. We would love to gather similar reactions from any of you who have actually witnessed any nuclear detonation. Contact Robert Thomsen if you would like to share your reactions (robert.j.thomsen@gmail.com)

For a new article from Smithsonian about Dorothy McKibben check the following website:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/los-alamos-atomic-secretary-was-never-told-what-manhattan-project-was-180955606/>

Finally, check a BBC podcast series about the history of the atomic bomb:

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08llv8n/episodes/downloads?xtor=ES-212-\[35457_worldservicenewsletter030920\]-20200903-\[bbcworldservice_bomb_podcast_link\]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08llv8n/episodes/downloads?xtor=ES-212-[35457_worldservicenewsletter030920]-20200903-[bbcworldservice_bomb_podcast_link])



The JROMC was established in 1970 to honor the memory of J. Robert Oppenheimer, the founding director of Los Alamos Laboratory. Under Oppenheimer's leadership an unprecedented wartime task was brilliantly accomplished; from him flowed a continuing legacy of exceptional scientific achievement.

Our annual lecture is our gift to the community but it is also important for fundraising for scholarships. Please give extra consideration to your contribution with this in mind.

I/We would like to support the
J. Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Committee

All contributions are tax deductible and directly support our annual lectures and scholarship program.

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