

The IMSA Great Minds Program®

Scientific Conversations Interviews on Science from The New York Times by Claudia Dreifus

PRAISE FOR SCIENTIFIC CONVERSATIONS: *"Being interviewed by Claudia Dreifus is like playing tennis with Steffi Graf; do your best, and you'll learn a lot; anything less, and she'll pave the court with you."* -Dan Rather *"Claudia Dreifus is a nonpareil of interviewers."* -Studs Terkel *"With this volume of scientific conversations, Claudia Dreifus gives us not just one luminous dinner guest, but a whole blazing comet shower of them...This is a wonderful book, crackling with character, eloquence, quirk, and wit, and you'll learn a lot without knowing what hit you."* - From the Foreword by Natalie Angier *"There is no format that makes science and scientists more digestible than a 'conversation' with an intelligent interlocutor who is intrigued with the subject. And there are few journalists who are able to get scientists talking about their work with more lucidity than Claudia Dreifus."* -Orville Schell, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism, University of California, Berkeley

Claudia Dreifus has made a career out of talking to some of the most interesting, intelligent people the world has to offer. She has interviewed celebrities, world leaders, political dissidents^{3/4}and most important for this discussion, cutting-edge scientists. In SCIENTIFIC CONVERSATIONS: Interviews on Science from The New York Times (Times Books/Henry Holt and Company; November 6, 2001; \$25.00) Claudia Dreifus delves into the thoughts and lives some of the most intriguing minds, uncovering surprising habits and extracting fascinating viewpoints on issues in science today. From Nobel-laureates to virtually unknown innovators, across a multitude of scientific disciplines, she introduces and explains the personalities behind the great accomplishments with savvy reporting and unquenchable curiosity. In these thirty-eight conversations from Science Times, a weekly section of The New York Times, Dreifus probes a wide variety of scientific minds. As each conversation unfolds, she draws her subjects into some fascinating and colorful exchanges on just about everything under the sun, such as:

- Polly Matzinger, immunologist, describing her previous jobs, including life as a Playboy Bunny, before she found science through waitressing.
- Dr. Lederman, Nobel Laureate, displaying the humor that earned him the title "the Mel Brooks of the Physics world."
- Dr. Rita Colwell, National Science Foundation director, explaining why physicists make good husbands.
- Dr. Benjamin Carson, pediatric neurosurgeon, describing how it feels "digging around in someone's brain."
- Jeff Getty, AIDS activist, discussing his baboon bone marrow transplant, and why he can't eat bananas in public.
- Ira Flatow, host of National Public Radio's Science Friday, recalling how his childhood fascination with electrical outlets almost blew up his mother's bathroom.
- Astronomer Royal Sir Martin Rees disclosing his astrological sign.
- John McPhee, Pulitzer-prize winning author, revealing how he came to terms with the vastness of geological time and how he once tied himself to a chair in order to write.

Using her colorful personality as well as her knowledge of philosophy, literature, current events, and her insatiable curiosity, Dreifus makes science tangible, accessible and entertaining. In each of these conversations, she goes beyond the usual banal patter of the modern-day profile, and reminds us that an interview can be, and indeed is, an art form. ABOUT THE AUTHOR Claudia

Dreifus has been a journalist since the 1960s. Before coming to the Science Times section of The New York Times, she was known for her incisive interviews with international political figures and cultural icons. Her work has appeared in The New York Times Magazine, Playboy, Ms., The Progressive, and Modern Maturity. A Senior Fellow at the World Policy Institute of the New School for Social Research, she lives in New York City.

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