

the Houston Museum of natural science

December 14, 2009

Dear Scott:

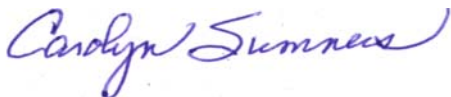
As we approach the year's end, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for all of the time, effort, and serious thought you have devoted to your presentations here at the Houston Museum of Natural Science and at the International Planetarium Society meeting in Chicago. You have graciously adapted your message for young students flying a Challenger mission, for inner city teenagers in our Career Challenge program, for the public during our celebration of the Apollo landing on the moon, for Museum volunteers and staff at a brown bag lunch, and for planetarium professionals from around the world at the IPS conference.

In each presentation you told your story, but adapted your narrative, comments, anecdotes, and interactions to your specific audience, taking on the roll of space hero, adventurer, inspirational teacher, scientist, physician, colleague, or friend, depending on the group and the focus of your message. Likewise each audience realized that you were talking just to them, making your presentation very personal and relevant to their interests, their needs, and their everyday lives. This is a talent that few presenters have and a reflection I have gathered from watching your presentations many times and seeing how skilled you are at adapting to your audience.

As educators, we appreciate your focus on teamwork, group success and the potential for others to follow in your footsteps. With very few exceptions, the days are gone when a single person could change the world; we all succeed as part of a successful team. Your individual accomplishments in space and on Mt. Everest bring our admiration, but your presentations are never about you – but rather about the team that made your successes possible. Your humility, good-humor, and insistence on sharing all glory – even taking our teachers with you to Mt. Everest through the Internet – make you unique and highly valued as a speaker, a colleague, and a friend.

Thanks for being yourself and understanding how and why you are such an inspiration for others.

Sincerely,



Dr. Carolyn Sumners
Vice President for Astronomy and the Physical Sciences
Houston Museum of Natural Science