

= Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams =

" Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams " (also referred to as " The Last Lecture ") was a lecture given by Carnegie Mellon University computer science professor Randy Pausch on September 18 , 2007 , that received a large amount of media coverage , and was the basis for The Last Lecture , a New York Times best @-@ selling book co @-@ authored with Wall Street Journal reporter Jeffrey Zaslow . Pausch had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in September 2006 . On September 19 , 2006 , Pausch underwent a pancreaticoduodenectomy to remove the malignant tumor from his pancreas . In August 2007 , after doctors discovered that the cancer had recurred , Pausch was given a terminal diagnosis and was told to expect a remaining three to six months of good health .

During the lecture , Pausch was upbeat and humorous , alternating between wisecracks , insights on computer science and engineering education , advice on building multi @-@ disciplinary collaborations , working in groups and interacting with other people , offering inspirational life lessons , and performing push @-@ ups on stage . He also commented on the irony that the " Last Lecture " series had recently been renamed as " Journeys " : " I thought , damn , I finally nailed the venue and they renamed it . " After Pausch finished his lecture , Steve Seabolt , on behalf of Electronic Arts , which is now collaborating with CMU in the development of Alice 3 @. @ 0 , pledged to honor Pausch by creating a memorial scholarship for women in computer science , in recognition of Pausch 's support and mentoring of women in CS and engineering .

Professor Pausch 's " Last Lecture " has received attention and recognition both from the American media and from news sources around the world . The video of the speech became an Internet sensation , being viewed over a million times in the first month after its delivery on social networking sites such as YouTube , Google video , MySpace , and Facebook . Randy Pausch gave an abridged version of his speech on The Oprah Winfrey Show in October 2007 . On April 9 , 2008 , the ABC network aired an hour @-@ long Diane Sawyer feature on Pausch entitled " The Last Lecture : A Love Story For Your Life " . Four days after his death from pancreatic cancer on July 25 , 2008 , ABC aired a tribute to Pausch , remembering his life and his famous lecture .

= = Background = =

= = = Previous lectures = = =

Pausch was known for some lectures in his previous jobs . In his previous career , Pausch was associate professor in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Virginia 's School of Engineering and Applied Science in 1997 and 1998 , and also worked for The Walt Disney Company as an imagineer and for Electronic Arts . At the University of Virginia , he was known for a lecture on the importance of making technology more friendly to users in which he demonstrated his point by presenting a VCR (other wise known as a video cassette recorder) that was hard to program and then smashing it with a sledgehammer . He was also known for his lecture on time management which he delivered in 1998 at the University of Virginia , and again in 2007 at the same venue . " Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams " was the first lecture of the nine part " Journeys " lecture series conducted by Carnegie Mellon , which also included speakers such as Raj Reddy , Jay Apt , and Jared Cohon , the university president . The series of lectures was focused on university staff members discussing their professional journeys and the decisions and challenges they faced .

= = = Terminal cancer = = =

At the time that Pausch gave the lecture , he was a pancreatic cancer patient . In an interview , Pausch stated that he had felt bloated , and learned that he had a cancerous tumor when doctors performed a CT Scan to check for gallstones . He then underwent pancreaticoduodenectomy

surgery (or the " Whipple procedure ") to try to stop the growth of the cancerous tumor in his body , which later proved to be unsuccessful . The doctors removed his gall bladder , parts of his small intestine , a third of his pancreas , and parts of his stomach , and proceeded to begin an experimental radiation treatment that could possibly increase his chances of survival for another 5 years to 45 percent . Pausch began the radiation treatments in November 2006 and stopped in May 2007 , and felt that he was in good health after finishing . In July and August , tests conducted at Johns Hopkins University showed that Pausch was free of cancer . However , in late August of that year , Pausch informed readers of his website that his cancer had returned , saying : " A recent CT scan showed that there are 10 tumors in my liver , and my spleen is also peppered with small tumors . The doctors say that it is one of the most aggressive recurrences they have ever seen . " The doctors estimated Pausch had three to six months of good health left to live .

Pausch based the lecture on the generic " Last Lecture " given by some professors , and on the idea of imagining what one would say and what one would want their legacy to be if they could only have one last chance to share their knowledge with the world . Carnegie Mellon had previously had a lecture series titled the " Last Lecture " , but had renamed the series to " Journeys " , and had staff talk about their professional experiences . Pausch was offered the lecture around the time when he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer , and had just received the news that he only had a few months left to live after his unsuccessful treatment for the tumors . Pausch nearly cancelled the lecture due to the terminal cancer , but discussed the issue with his wife and decided to take the one final chance to share his thoughts with the world . Pausch compared it to the final scene of *The Natural* , in which Roy Hobbs (the main character) overcomes injury and old age to hit one final home run .

= = = Speech inspiration = = =

Before Pausch was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer , he was originally going to have his lecture based on the generic academic @-@ style " Last Lecture " talk explained earlier , and was not expecting his cancer to play a part in the decision . Pausch could not think of a subject for the speech , and was constantly being e @-@ mailed by speech organizers and event organizers from Carnegie Mellon . Pausch was told in August , a month before the lecture , that a poster must be printed and he needed to decide on a subject immediately . The same week , he was told that the prognosis for his pancreatic cancer was to be terminal . Pausch nearly canceled the lecture after hearing the news . He was deciding whether to make the speech , or to stay at home to get his family in order so that they would be set to live a normal life following Pausch 's death . Pausch discussed the matter with his wife Jai , who requested that Pausch stay at home . Jai suggested that Pausch should be spending some of his time left with their three children , not giving a speech at his workplace . Pausch decided against this , after explaining that his children would remember him through seeing his lecture .

= = Speech = =

" Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams " was delivered on September 18 , 2007 , at Carnegie Mellon University 's McConomy Auditorium . Over 450 Carnegie Mellon students , staff members , and friends of Pausch attended the lecture , leaving only standing room as this was more than the auditorium could hold . Pausch later commented about this in an interview , saying " A couple of hundred people in a room , looking and listening and laughing and applauding ? hopefully at the appropriate times ? that gives a lot of validation to my kids that a lot of people believe in this , and a lot of people who knew me believe that I did my best to try to live this way . " The first introduction of the speech as well as the series of lectures was given by Indira Nair , the Vice Provost for Education at Carnegie Mellon . Nair first explained the university 's aforementioned lecture series called " Journeys " , in which eight more professors from Carnegie Mellon would share their insights on their professional and personal experiences over the years .

Pausch was then introduced by Steve Sea @-@ bolt , who was the Vice President of Worldwide

Publishing and Marketing at Electronic Arts , in addition to being Pausch 's close friend and former co @-@ worker . Sea @-@ bolt began with a joke referring to Electronic Arts , and another joke about a bet he and Pausch had made about how many people would attend the lecture , saying that " ... depending upon whose version of the story you hear , he either owes me 20 dollars or his new Volkswagen . " Seabolt began the next part of the introduction by talking about Pausch 's academic achievements and previous career with the University of Virginia and Electronic Arts . Seabolt concluded his introduction by describing the qualities of Pausch , saying that " Randy 's dedication to making the world a better place is self evident to anyone who has crossed paths with him . " He described how his accomplishments had affected others , as well as his wife and three children . Seabolt then turned the speech over to Pausch , who was greeted with a standing ovation .

As Pausch walked into the standing ovation , he tried to stop the applause , get the audience to sit down , and begin the speech by commenting " make me earn it " , to which one member of the audience responded " you did " . He then commented on the irony of his " last lecture " in a series that used to be the " Last Lecture " series , but was renamed " Journeys " : " It 's wonderful to be here . What Indira didn 't tell you is that this lecture series used to be called the ' Last Lecture ' . If you had one last lecture to give before you died , what would it be ? I thought , damn , I finally nailed the venue and they renamed it . "

Before beginning part I of the lecture , Pausch explained his story of having pancreatic cancer and only having 3 to 6 months to live , but still made a joke of it by saying that he was still in the best shape of his life (and " better than most of you [the audience] ") , proceeding to do a series of push @-@ ups on stage while still speaking . Pausch also talked about what he would not cover in the lecture , which included his family and children , religion , spirituality , and his terminal cancer or any other cancer .

= = = Pausch 's childhood dreams = = =

Pausch then went to the first part of his speech , explaining his childhood dreams and how he accomplished (or tried to accomplish) them . Pausch first explained his childhood , as well as his family life in the 1960s . Pausch stated that he had a " really good childhood " , and , when going back through his family archive of photographs , had never found a picture of him not smiling . Some of these pictures were shown on the projection as slides , including one of him dreaming . He explained how he was inspired by the Apollo 11 lunar landing in 1969 . Pausch then transitioned to a slide which contained a list of his childhood dreams , and explained them . His dreams were being in zero gravity , playing in the National Football League , being the author of a World Book Encyclopedia article , being Captain Kirk , being " one of the guys who won the big stuffed animals in the amusement park " , and becoming a Disney Imagineer .

First off , Pausch explained his dream of being in zero gravity . As a child , this had been a dream inspired by Apollo 11 , and had stayed with him as an adult . When he was the computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon , he learned of a program that NASA has that allows college students to go up into the air in NASA 's Vomit Comet , which uses parabolic arcs to simulate the feeling of weightlessness . Faculty members were not allowed to go (Pausch called this a " brick wall " he faced) , so he had to present himself as a web journalist , because local media was allowed on . Pausch proceeded to begin talking about his second childhood dream , playing in the National Football League . Although Pausch was never a player in the National Football League , he spoke about his childhood experiences with Pop Warner Football and how they had affected his life and taught him lessons . Pausch then moved on to his dream of publishing an article in the World Book Encyclopedia . As a child , Pausch always kept and read a World Book Encyclopedia in his home . As he progressed into a career , he became one of the leading professors in the field of virtual reality . World Book then called Pausch , interested in him writing for the encyclopedia . Currently , the article " virtual reality " in the World Book Encyclopedia is the one authored by Pausch .

Next , Pausch explained his dream of being like Captain Kirk from the Star Trek series , with the slide showing " Being like Meeting Captain Kirk " . Pausch explained that he realized that there were some things he just could not do , and that was one of them . He eventually changed the goal into

meeting William Shatner , the actor who played Captain Kirk . Shatner had written a book on the science of Star Trek , and had gone to Pausch for help with the virtual reality section of the book . Pausch met and worked with Shatner for this purpose . Pausch concluded the section with the story of his becoming an Imagineer at Disney , as well as his achieving the goal of " being one of those guys who wins stuffed animals " , which was at a carnival with his wife and children .

= = = Enabling the dreams of others = = =

After explaining his childhood dreams , Pausch then began the second part of his speech , which was about how he enabled the dreams of others . He decided to become a professor , and reflected in the speech that there was no better job to enable the childhood dreams of other people . He also mentioned that working for Electronic Arts was " probably a close second " . Pausch told the audience about how he realized he could enable the dreams of others , due to Tommy Burnett , one of his students at the University of Virginia . Burnett was interested in joining Pausch 's research group . Pausch asked Burnett what his childhood dream was while talking about joining the team , and he responded that his dream was to work on the next Star Wars film . Burnett worked on Pausch 's virtual reality team while at the University of Virginia , and Pausch helped Burnett to try achieve this dream . When Pausch moved to Carnegie Mellon , his entire team moved with him except Burnett , who had been offered a job by Lucasfilm (the creator of Star Wars) . He eventually worked with Lucasfilm on three Star Wars films : The Phantom Menace , Attack of the Clones , and Revenge of the Sith .

This led Pausch to conduct a virtual reality class at Carnegie Mellon , to teach others and to help them realize their childhood dreams . In the course , 50 students from the university were separated into random teams of four and were each assigned a project relating to building a virtual world . Each group had two weeks to work on the project , and then presented the project to the group . The teams were then randomized again and a new project began . The project then evolved into something that people came to watch , and helped his students realize their potential . Finally , Pausch gave a few words of advice on how others could achieve their childhood dreams , and who his role models were when he was trying to do so .

= = = Conclusion = = =

After Pausch finished his lecture , Steve Seabolt , on behalf of Electronic Arts , which is now collaborating with Carnegie Mellon in the development of Alice 3 @. @ 0 , pledged to honor Pausch by creating a memorial scholarship for women in computer science in recognition of Pausch 's support and mentoring of women in CS and engineering . Then , university president Jared Cohon called his contributions to the university and to education " remarkable and stunning " . He then announced that Carnegie Mellon would build a raised pedestrian bridge named for Pausch in honor of his contributions to the university and to the world . This connected Carnegie Mellon 's new Computer Science building and the Center for the Arts , a symbol of the way Pausch linked those two areas . Finally , Brown University professor Andries van Dam followed Pausch 's last lecture with a tearful and impassioned speech praising him for his courage and leadership , calling him a role model .

= = Post @-@ speech media coverage = =

Pausch was named " Person of the Week " on ABC 's World News with Charles Gibson on September 21 . His " Last Lecture " attracted wide attention from the international media , became an Internet hit , and was viewed over a million times in the first month after its delivery . On October 22 , 2007 , Pausch appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show , where he discussed his situation and recapped his " Last Lecture " for millions of TV viewers .

On October 6 , 2007 , Pausch joined the Pittsburgh Steelers for the day during their regular practice , after the organization learned that one of his childhood dreams mentioned in his " Last Lecture "

was to play in the National Football League . A devoted Star Trek fan , Pausch was invited by film director J. J. Abrams to film a role in the latest Star Trek movie . Abrams heard of Pausch 's condition and sent a personal e @-@ mail inviting Pausch to the set . Pausch happily accepted and traveled to Los Angeles , California to shoot his scene . In addition to appearing in the film , he also has a line of dialogue and donated the \$ 217 @.@ 06 paycheck to charity . On April 9 , 2008 , the ABC network aired an hour @-@ long Diane Sawyer feature on Pausch entitled " The Last Lecture : A Love Story For Your Life " . On July 29 , 2008 , ABC aired a follow up to the Last Lecture special , remembering Pausch .

= = Book = =

The Disney @-@ owned publisher Hyperion paid \$ 6 @.@ 7 million for the rights to publish a book about Pausch called The Last Lecture , co @-@ authored by Pausch and Wall Street Journal reporter Jeffrey Zaslow . The Last Lecture explained Pausch 's speech , and the events that led up to it . According to Robert Miller , a publisher for Hyperion Books , the book would " flesh out his speech " and show others " how to deal with mortality " and how to live well while death is imminent . The book was well @-@ received , eventually earning the number one spot on the New York Times bestseller list in the " Advice " category during the week of June 22 , 2008 . The book remained on the New York Times bestseller list for 80 straight weeks .