

ISF Hosts Annual Luncheon, Honors Teachers *Keynote challenges improvement in math and science*

The state of education in Irving ISD and the nation was addressed during the annual Irving Schools Foundation (ISF) Education Luncheon September 17 at the Four Seasons Resort & Club.



Mayor Herbert Gears presents a City Proclamation to ISF Executive Director, Elizabeth Philipp, who retired from the organization in August. Photo courtesy of TJ Friedel.

Keynote speaker Tom Luce, CEO National Math & Science Initiative and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education, addressed the critical challenge to our way of life due to falling skills in math and science, citing the massive loss of jobs to overseas nations for many high-end and technical jobs. He said that although our skill levels in the U.S. are going up, we are “not keeping pace with the rest of the world” and, referring to the global job force, he said we “now have two billion competitors.” He also noted it isn’t simply the process of learning formulas and algorithms that is at issue, but the critical

thinking that accompanies those areas of study. Yet, there is still work to do and we should each—as a resident, an employee, a volunteer, a civic leader, a government official, a parent—find ways that we can support the work of our schools. It will mean a better community for all of us.

Mayor Gears can be reached at mayor@cityofirving.org

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Following Mr. Luce, Truman Bell, Senior Program Officer for Education and Diversity for ExxonMobil Corporation, stepped to the podium and echoed Luce’s comments, adding that middle-school girls, in particular, need encouragement to become more involved in math and science studies. To demonstrate ExxonMobil’s commitment to the effort, Mr. Bell briefed the audience on details of the company’s \$100 million donation to the program.



Pictured, from left, are: Lisa Watkins, ISF Board President; Diana Pfaff, past Board President; U.S. Congressman Kenny Marchant; keynote speaker Tom Luce, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education; and Elizabeth Philipp, ISF Executive Director.