

## AHMED H. ZEWAIL

On the banks of the Nile, the Rosetta Branch, I lived an enjoyable childhood. I was born in Egypt in Damanhour, the “City of Horous”, only 60 km from Alexandria. In retrospect, it is remarkable that my childhood origins were flanked by two great places – Rosetta, the city where the famous Stone was discovered, and Alexandria, the home of ancient learning.

I graduated from the University of Alexandria in 1967 with a B.S. degree, and shortly thereafter, in 8 months, with a Master’s degree. From the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, USA, I received my Ph.D. degree, and at the University of California at Berkeley I completed two years of a postdoctoral fellowship. In 1976, I joined the faculty of the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and I am currently the Linus Pauling Chair Professor of Chemistry and Professor of Physics, and the Director of the NSF Laboratory for Molecular Sciences.

At Caltech, our research efforts have been devoted to developments of ultrafast lasers and electrons for studies of molecular dynamics with atomic- scale resolution. In the field of femtochemistry, developed by the Caltech group, and for which the 1999 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded, the focus is on the fundamental femtosecond processes in chemistry and in related fields of physics and biology.

I have had the fortune of a wonderful family and the friendship of my wife, Dr. Dema Faham, who is here today. Currently we live in San Marino, California. Two of my children, Maha and Amani, are doing well in science and have graduated from Caltech and Berkeley, respectively. The two younger sons, Nabeel and Hani, have not yet reached this stage of college education, but the trajectory is clear! My scientific family over the past 20 years consists of some 150 postdoctoral research fellows, graduate students and visiting associates.

It is a pleasure to be inducted into this distinguished and historic academy.