

The
LAST LECTURE



By Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow

Doctors gave Carnegie Mellon Professor Randy Pausch three to six more months of “good health” when they diagnosed him with pancreatic cancer last August.

A month later, Pausch delivered a heartfelt public talk full of inspirational life lessons and wisdom in front of a packed crowd of CMU students, colleagues, and friends. The lecture he gave—“Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams”—wasn’t about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of reconsidering their own ambitions, of finding new ways to look at other people’s flaws, talents and feelings, and of seizing every moment (because “time is all you have...and you may find one day that you have less than you think”). He offered prescriptions for dealing with life’s most debilitating roadblocks, and celebrated mentors and protégés with an open heart.

The school shot video of Pausch's lecture—and soon the footage began spreading across the internet popping up in tens of thousands of web sites. (The talk, which has been viewed by more than 6 million people on the internet, can now be seen at www.TheLastLecture.com.) Pausch was soon receiving emails from all over the world. People took it upon themselves to translate his lecture into other languages (Italian, German, Chinese, Arabic and more) and to post their versions online. A university in India held a screening of the lecture. Hundreds of students attended, told their friends how powerful it was, and hundreds more demanded a second screening a week later. Many Americans compared his talk to Lou Gehrig’s “Luckiest Man” speech.

Pausch now shares his insights in a new book, offering straightforward wisdom on matters of love, gratitude, loyalty, seizing each moment, and surmounting the challenges he calls “brick walls.” **THE LAST LECTURE (Hyperion; April 8, 2008; \$21.95;**

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Hardcover), as a book, goes beyond the phenomenon of that afternoon talk—mixing humor here, unexpected inspiration there, and wrapping it all in an uncommon optimism.

In this book, Pausch combines the elements that made his lecture such a phenomenon. He provides answers to questions such as: If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy? What does Pausch want to impart to his three children, all under 7 years old? How does he feel about achieving one's dreams? (Pausch recently got a role in Star Trek and played with the Pittsburgh Steelers.)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Randy Pausch is a professor of Computer Science, Human Computer Interaction, and Design at Carnegie Mellon University. From 1988 to 1997, he taught at the University of Virginia. He is an award-winning teacher and researcher, and has worked with Adobe, Google, Electronic Arts (EA), and Walt Disney Imagineering, and pioneered the Alice (www.alice.org) software project. The Alice program is a revolutionary way to teach computer programming in a 3D environment to first time students. He lives with his wife and three children.

Jeffrey Zaslow, a columnist for *The Wall Street Journal*, attended the Last Lecture, and wrote the story that helped fuel worldwide interest in it. He lives in suburban Detroit with his wife, Sherry, and daughters Jordan, Alex, and Eden.

For more on **THE LAST LECTURE**, please log onto www.TheLastLecture.com.

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For more information on pancreatic cancer, please visit the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network website at www.pancan.org.