



PHYSICS COLLOQUIUM

Distinguished Alumni Award Winner

What life is like for a physicist in Congress



Bill Foster

U.S. Congressman Representing the 14th District of Illinois

Host: Department of Physics

Abstract: Bill Foster is a High-Energy particle physicist, Madison native and UW Physics graduate recently elected to replace former Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert in a hotly-contested special election for the U.S. Congress. Bill is the son of UW Law School Prof. George William (Bill) Foster, a civil rights lawyer and early activist in the Dane County Democratic Party. While a student at the UW, Bill and his younger brother Fred founded Electronic Theatre Controls, Inc., now the world's largest stage lighting company with headquarters in Middleton. Returning to physics grad school at Harvard, Bill's Ph.D thesis experiment was the IMB Proton Decay detector and was the co-recipient of the Rossi Prize for the discovery the neutrino burst from supernova SN1987A. Bill's career in High-Energy Physics included 22 years at Fermilab, where he helped build the CDF experiment that discovered the top quark, built high-speed integrated circuits, 100kA superconducting magnets, and particle beam damper circuits. Bill was the co-inventor and magnet designer of the Fermilab Recycler Antiproton Storage Ring, a 3.3 km antiproton storage ring used to increase the luminosity of the Fermilab Tevatron.

In 2006, Bill tragically succumbed to the familial recessive gene for adult-onset political activism. He will describe his experiences as a physicist running for office, serving in the U.S. Congress, and as a member of the Financial Services Committee.

2241 Chamberlin Hall • Friday, May 8, 2009 • 4:00 P.M.

cookies & coffee served at 3:30 p.m.