

Today we have gathered to honor the lifetime achievements of a truly remarkable person who has changed the perspectives of people everywhere. This woman has shown that passion and equality come first. Every year, she grows more as a leader. She slays ignorance wherever it may lie. She is a math whiz, computer programmer, and a fabulous, feisty feminist. She has done considerable work with the Illinois ACLU in Chicago, eventually coming to head the organization for a period of time. Her work in environmental preservation and engineering has redefined the fields and opened up opportunities for women worldwide.

Even from her days in high school, she was doing her part to make the world a more equitable place. Her friends have always described her as a lacrosse beast, a persistent and powerful speaker, and a fierce friend. She has always believed in the process of democracy and in her role as an advocate; as a senior in high school, her mother had to prevent her from protesting outside of Charlie Baker's house after getting her wisdom teeth removed. Years later, she won the Massachusetts' gubernatorial race against the same man, coming to serve as one of the most beloved and successful governors in the state's history. Her skill in math and computer science rivals that of Ada Lovelace and Alan Turing. In fact, her talent was so widely recognized that MIT gave her an honorary degree in the subject following her graduation from Pitzer College.

To sum up this remarkable woman, here is what some of her friends and family had to say. Her brother Gabe Dowd says, "she means a lot to me because her sense of humor has really helped me during times when I felt really alone at home. She's always had my back but also has never been afraid to call me out if I'm being stupid."

Her longtime tutor, John Wiggs, wants her to know that she is “an organized and very bright student who is both thoughtful and kind to those around her.”

Her friend Ella Bernard says, “Austin is the most cheerful and fun person I have ever met. She can brighten up the cloudiest of days with her optimistic attitude. She's passionate about what she believes in and is not afraid to express it loud. She tells the best stories that leave us all laughing until our stomachs hurt.”

On behalf of the ones who love her and the ones she has influenced, we are honored to present Austin Dowd with this year’s Nobel Prizes in peace and in science. Congratulations, Austin.