

# awwis

association  
for women  
in science

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**Coming of Age**  
Growing global leaders  
in entrepreneurship  
Page 30

**Peer Networks**  
why they're important at  
every stage of your career  
Page 18

**PLUS: Get Organized Now**  
Page 40

## Women and Leadership

How do women in STEM  
define leadership

*your network | your resource | your voice*



# In-'te-grā-tē

**Neal Lane, PhD**, (AWIS Member since 2006)

**What is your favorite word?**  
"Integrity"

**How do you define "integrity"?**

The word integrity includes the qualities of being honest, fair and exhibiting ethical behavior. Fairness includes insuring that everyone – women and men of all backgrounds, ethnicities, religious choice (including the choice not to be religious), sexual orientation, disability or any other personal attributes that too often are a cause for discrimination – are treated fairly. Most of us experience circumstances during our lives that test these qualities. How we deal with those is a measure of our integrity. But I would stretch the definition to include being "humane," which implies consideration of the feelings and circumstances of others. I've worked with many leaders – inside government, in academia, in the business world, and in other sectors. The women and men who demonstrate leadership show, through their actions that they care about people above, below and around them.

**Has your word influenced you during your career, or is it a word that you have chosen retrospectively?**

Integrity has always been my objective in dealing with circumstances and people I have encountered in my teaching and research and, later, in administration and government service. That said, integrity is an ideal that continues to be a work in progress. But I hope that those with whom I have worked would agree that integrity is a personal objective. Of course a successful career in science (and many other professions) suggests other words – vision, passion, curiosity, perseverance, courage, determination, commitment and drive – but without integrity, I believe, the others don't matter much.

**What is your current job?**

I recently retired my faculty position at Rice University as Malcolm Gillis University Professor and Professor of Physics and Astronomy, thus adding Emeritus to those titles. I will continue to hold an appointment as Senior Fellow in Science and Technology Policy at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy.

**How would you describe your career?**

I have had the good fortune to enjoy several careers. My son once said, when introducing me at his wedding reception: "My dad just can't seem to hold a job!" I've



enjoyed physics teaching and research (my field was theoretical atomic and molecular physics, collision phenomena, in particular); administrative appointments as Chancellor of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and Provost at Rice; and public service as NSF Director (1993-98) and President Clinton's science advisor (and Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy) (1998-2001). These jobs are quite different, but one thread runs through all of them – consideration and respect for the people around me. And the willingness of co-workers to provide the help I needed to do my job.

**What else interests you?**

I am interested in many things and many people – family, of course, comes first. The list is long, but it includes: most areas of science, most recently, geology and geophysics (rocks and minerals have been a hobby from childhood), as well as astrophysics and cosmology; U.S. policy and politics (pretty frustrating these days); photography (still could use some improvement); the underwater world (scuba diving, in moderation, and snorkeling). At Rice, I still give occasional lectures and work with students and colleagues at Rice's Baker Institute on various science and technology policy issues. ▶