

From the Office of Public Relations
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139
Telephone: (617) 864-6900, Ext. 2701

FOR A.M. NEWSPAPERS OF
MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1970

A black professor of physics and mathematics at Alabama A & M College, Normal, Ala., has just won a \$10,000 award for gifted teaching. He is spending this term at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology engaged in teaching and research and helping organize a Student-Faculty exchange program between southern black colleges and M.I.T.

He is Dr. Howard J. Foster, Visiting Professor of Physics at M.I.T., who Sunday night in New York City was one of 10 persons to receive 1970 E. Harris Harbison Awards for Gifted Teaching from the Danforth Foundation. The award for each recipient consists of \$10,000 which each winner may use at his discretion in furtherance of his academic career and interests.

Dr. Foster won his award for his teaching at Alabama A & M.

Dr. Foster and members of the physics department at M.I.T. are developing a new program under which M.I.T. and seven black colleges propose to combine their talents and resources to stimulate interest in science and research among students and faculty of the schools involved.

Under the program as presently planned, selected science students from the southern colleges will spend one or two terms in residence at M.I.T., typically during the junior year. In addition, science faculty members from the southern colleges will be able to come to M.I.T. for one term or more of teaching and research and selected M.I.T. science professors and students will be able to spend similar periods of time at the black colleges.

The program already has been started on a small scale with support from M.I.T.'s own resources pending large-scale support. Three students from Alabama A & M and North Carolina A & T University spent the spring term of 1970 at M.I.T. Dr. Foster is spending this term at M.I.T. teaching a special freshman physics section for students who

-- more --

Dr. Foster -- 2

are mathematically oriented and doing research in his own field of solid state physics, while an M.I.T physics teacher, Dr. Robert Gilmore, is spending the same term at Alabama A & M.

Dr. Foster, a former scientist for the National Bureau of Standards of Washington, D. C., and the U. S. Army Missile Command's Laboratories at Redstone Arsenal, Ala., and the author of numerous publications, holds A.B. and M.A. degrees from Fiske University, Nashville, Tenn., attended Moorehouse College at Atlanta, Ga., and the University of Chicago and received the Ph.D. degree from Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C., in 1964.

Early in his life, Dr. Foster had to overcome problems of poverty and race in his native Alabama in order to achieve his education. He dropped out of public school after the seventh grade, worked as a laborer and spent two years in military service, after which he was able to complete high school and go on to higher education.

Also among the recipients of \$10,000 Harbison Awards from the Danforth Foundation Sunday evening was Dr. Sol Gittleman, a professor of German at Tufts University, Medford, Mass. The awards, which have been made annually for the past nine years, are intended to encourage innovative and creative teaching in American colleges.

-- 30 --