



THE HUN SCHOOL OF PRINCETON

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Dr. Olsen Shares a Story of Perseverance and Space Travel

Princeton, NJ – Dr. Gregory Olsen, entrepreneur, engineer, scientist, and the third private citizen to orbit Earth on the International Space Station, addressed The Hun School community on Tuesday, December 3rd as part of its Centennial Speaker Series. During his presentation: “From Entrepreneurship to Spaceship” Dr. Olsen often referred to the value of perseverance. He said, “If you want to know the secret to life, or entrepreneurship, or anything else, it’s just this: don’t give up. It’s as simple and also as difficult as those three words.”

Dr. Olsen went on to explain how some of his personal struggles became his greatest triumphs – first as a student who failed trigonometry in high school, but through summer school and perseverance gained admission to a collegiate engineering program. And later as a sixty-year-old man, and how a pre-existing health condition nearly prevented him from travelling to space.

Earlier in his life, Dr. Olsen had a spontaneous collapsed lung, which was monitored closely during his training for space travel. In 2004, a spot appeared on an X-Ray of his lung, and his training was halted. After eight re-admissions requests, and a trip to Moscow with his doctor in tow, Dr. Olsen was finally given permission. He said, “I never would have gotten there [space], if I had given up. And believe me, after the sixth rejection letter, I began to think, ‘maybe I ought to come up with a Plan B,’ but I didn’t give up. And just as with a failing trigonometry grade didn’t keep me out of engineering school, a medical condition didn’t keep me out of space.”

Dr. Olsen was the third private citizen to orbit Earth on the International Space Station (ISS). After training for five months in Moscow, he launched on a Russian Soyuz rocket TMA-7 on October 1, 2005 with Cosmonaut Valeri Tokarev and Astronaut Bill McArthur (Expedition 12). He performed more than 150 orbits of the earth and logged almost 4 million miles of weightless travel during his 10 days in space.

In 1984, Dr. Olsen and Vladimir Ban founded EPITAXX, a fiber-optic detector manufacturer. It was sold in 1990 for \$12 million. He then founded Sensors Unlimited, a near-infrared camera manufacturer in 1992 with Marshall Cohen. Sensors was sold to Finisar Corp. for \$600 million in 2000, repurchased by the management team in 2002 for \$6 million, and then sold again to Goodrich, Corp. in 2005 for \$60 million. Dr. Olsen was awarded 12 patents, wrote more than 100 technical

papers, co-authored several book chapters. After an illustrious career as a research scientist and entrepreneur, Dr. Olsen is now president of GHO Ventures in Princeton, New Jersey.

Photograph caption:

IMG_0087.jpg – Dr. Gregory Olsen, entrepreneur, engineer, scientist, and the third private citizen to orbit Earth on the International Space Station, addressed The Hun School community on Tuesday, December 3rd as part of its Centennial Speaker Series.

About The Hun School of Princeton:

The Hun School of Princeton is a co-educational, private boarding school in Princeton, New Jersey. Individual attention and strong student-faculty relationships are the hallmarks of the School. On the 45-acre campus between Philadelphia and New York City, student-centered, hands-on learning prepares students for the global community in which they will live and work. The Hun School is comprised of 629 students in its Middle School, Upper School, and Postgraduate Program. The Hun School is home to students from seventeen countries and fifteen states.