

Respect for a master's in physics

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LETTERS

Respect for a master's in physics

With regard to Toni Feder's story about physics master's degrees (PHYSICS TODAY, April 2019, page 22), I am glad that the degree finally seems to

be getting some respect. I received my master's 30 years ago from a PhD-granting research university. Although I had been accepted to continue toward my PhD, I intended from the beginning to pursue only a master's and then look for teaching positions. I remember being told, "That and a dime will get you a cup of coffee," and I often received unsolicited advice that I would be useless to the profession without a PhD.

Partly on the suggestion of my adviser, who counseled me to think about the goals I'd had when I entered graduate school, I accepted a one-year position as a visiting lecturer at a nearby branch campus. That job led to a tenure-track position at a nearby community college the next year. There I had a professionally and materially satisfying 27-year career teaching and doing research.

For reasons mostly my own, I did eventually complete a PhD and a postdoc and have recently found myself as a lecturer back where I got my MS. I hope to stay until I retire. I have no regrets about what I've done and how I did it and per-

haps just a bit of pride in how much I accomplished with my master's degree, despite what I was told.

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Notes on a brilliant failure

The article "Ernest Lawrence's brilliant failure" by Joshua Roebke (PHYSICS TODAY, March 2019, page 32) gives a historical account of early work by the Nobel recipient and his associates at the University of California, Berkeley, to invent color TV. An alumnus of both Berkeley and the TV industry (1964–2006), I was surprised and pleased to learn of that work. I had not realized that Sony's Trinitron technology traces its origin back to Berkeley and Lawrence.

However, I was shocked by several inaccuracies. The article is misleading regarding the basic principles of the color

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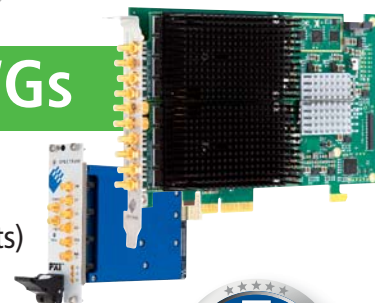
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