A meeting of the minds

Hollywood A-listers, Nobel Prize winners, Mayor Daley and myriad other geniuses rub elbows at International Achievement Summit

By Ellen Warren  Tribune senior correspondent

There’s not much in this life that will get Mayor Daley to cheerfully put on a Cubs cap.

But on a glorious afternoon, the city’s most renowned White Sox fan seemed almost giddy to be wearing Cubby blue, sitting along the third-base line at Wrigley Field.

In fact, Daley wasn’t there to watch a ballgame. The Cubs were playing in Anaheim.

The mayor was at Wrigley to listen to the unmistakable rumble of actor James Earl Jones who was perched atop the dugout, reading a poem about the Cubs written just for this occasion by Pulitzer Prize-winning fiction writer N. Scott Momaday.

A few rows behind Daley was George “Star Wars” Lucas. And yes, that was multi-Grammy winner Naomi Judd wobbling down a hot dog. Oh, also on hand were a bunch of Nobel Prize winners, a few multibillionaires, some certified geniuses and people working on a cure for cancer, manned space flights, world peace and such.

But wait. There’s more. So very much more.

The Friday visit to Wrigley Field was merely one outing in a four-day extravaganza that ended Sunday, an utterly unpublicized meeting of a group that its chairman, Wayne Reynolds, calls “America’s best kept secret.”

This was the third annual International Achievement Summit. It is a jaw-dropping collection of talent from virtually every area of human endeavor, including politics. This is where Daley comes in.

At the annual meeting in Dublin two years ago, Daley was one of 20 people named to the Academy of Achievement, which sponsors the summit. He was so won over by the gathering that a month or so later, at The Prime Rib restaurant in Washington, he launched his campaign to bring the meeting of big shots here.

That’s the short version of how it came to pass that publishing phenom “Chicken Soup for the Soul” Jack Canfield was able to cross paths at the Peninsula Hotel here last week with Nobel Peace Prize winner Shimon Peres. Canfield enthused to the grand old man of Israeli politics — who probably knows a thing or two about chicken soup — that he respected his striving to end the conflict between Jews and Palestinians.

The Peres-Canfield pairing was just one of scores of intriguing, unlikely encounters that make the academy members return to these annual gatherings (expenses are paid but that’s it) hoping to chat with other all-stars.

Another reason that the gathering has such drawing power is the central reason for these summits: To put some 150 boldface-name achievers together with the next generation of
time. Instead of living with one family as in December’s first edition. The duo are seen on a road trip from Florida back to Beverly Hills, the better to meet and condone to folks who work for a living. Given a hot pink truck and an Airstream trailer behind it, but no money or credit cards, they have to rely on what they possess of street smart skills (quote: “What are Bitchin’”) and the possibly irksome jobs the producers have set up for them. This extended culture clash continues to have its amusing, and seemingly revealing, moments, as it did in the first edition. Milton gets thrown, pretty violently, from a horse at a ranch that they visit in Wednesday’s first episode (7 p.m., WFLD-Ch. 32), and her reaction — an extreme pout, followed by an air-conditioned hospital trip — tells you that this is not a woman with whom you’d want to hire the Apartment Tray.

But there’s also been the often-funny thing that’s been happening, on what we suspect is nearly every- three-dimensional character, and watching use their blandness and larness to mood. gas money wears as thin as the fabric of their tops. Paris and Nicole, it seems, were fine for a one-series stand. But they’re not the kind of girls you want to spend every week with. A second episode airs at 8 p.m. Wednesday.

**Joe Schmo 2**: Spike TV had a surprise success with the first edition of its faux reality show, featuring one real guy and a bunch of actors. A sequel, in a sense, the holy grail of unscripted shows, shows the one that comment on the genre itself while still being hugely entertaining. This time, producers were once again able to pull off the hoax, but now they’re doing it to a man and a woman who think they’re on a dating show called “Last Chance for Love.”

Tim and Ingrid think they’re competing against other singles (authors) to win the hearts of a bachelor and his colleagues (both actors). It works because we get to hear the backroom interviews with both the contestants about their roles and the real people about being on this show (9 p.m., Tuesday) — and because the parody of dating shows is so sharp. There’s an ultra-smarmy host, a first eviction ceremony in which all the minorities are kicked off, and a voiceover that calls each one the “most shocking eviction ceremony.” You can’t really feel sorry for these contest after their woman (“I was more for love” segment), but especially after one of the contestants gives away at the outset and they don’t immediately catch on. How did you get this show, Ingrid asks, inadvertently using actor lines. An actor, scheduled to be kicked off immediately. “Through my agent. I just got the call yesterday.” But did she notice? There may be a twist.

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**NEW YORK**

**JUDD Acheson**: A meeting of minds at symposium continued from page 1

International leaders. This year, 250 smartly dressed students from 24 countries were in Chicago to learn from their heroes.

"We’re having an discussion about whether people are going to be evil," said the multi-Grand Union of the symposium, "I was seeing if they tried to rub a dab of erant Wrigg- y P if we could get a shirt of a new friend, New Zealand Rhodes Scholar Sean Gourley. "I don’t know who she was," said Gourley, 23, a PhD candidate in physics at Oxford University. "We don’t have country music in New Zealand."

**Daley can boogie down**

After a performance at the House of Blues Thursday night by blues legend B.B. King, one of this year’s academy inductees, Judd stood on the stage with his hand shaped on Mayor Daley’s left shoulder and had this stunning revelation: “This guy can boogie down. Let me tell you, the mayor of Chicago can dance.”

Looking on was four-time In- served champion Susan Butcher, who flew in from Alaska and Paul Nurse, Nobel laureate in medicine and president of New York Rockefeller University. Sir Paul, a charming Brit, who is also a knight, was induct- ed into the academy in Dublin in 2002 along with Daley, Henry Kissinger and Chuck Berry.

“I couldn’t believe it. I was [in the audience] and this lady, I think she was a red shirt came in and said, ’Hi, and three minutes later he’s singing to us,’ he heard of his first encounter with the legendary Berry.

Speaking of legendary enter- tainers, I met Julie Andrews, who was fantastic,” said Paltrow, who is working on a PhD in crystallography at Cambridge University.

Andrews was also an inductee this year and she sat in a back row through many of the lectures. These included such dis- tinguished talents as former President Bill Clinton, Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin and Academy Award-winning producer David Putnam ("Chart of Fire," "Midnight Express," "The Killing Fields") and a crop of people you’d never think would be together," said John Horner, the Montana paleontologist whose work on dinosaurs was the model for the "Jurassic Park" character Dr. Alan Grant. A teacher at Montana State University, he carries a replica of an alligator claw in his herringbone jacket pocket as a conversation starter.

"They really want to part of the students. They’re a real inspiration," Horner said. “I’ve had some in this group, I got kicked out of college." "I don’t think this is for the kids,” George Lucas said, “to learn that most of their heroes are just like them” who didn’t know where life would take them. “We just got out of college. Nobel laureates and basketball players are the first to fall into that category,” Lucas said.

The future looks bright

Meeting the students, "you realize that their future ahead for mankind,” said Pulitzer-winning biographer A. Scott Berg. Monday: 70, an American In- dian who lives in New Mexico, among the students was an Indian who dreams of becoming a physicist and of living in Chicago. “I don’t know whether I’ll ever make it out of college. Nobel laureates and basketball players are the first to fall into that category,” Lucas said.

The future looks bright

Monday rhubarbized not just about the students previous the time he was meeting, or hoping to meet, his New Mexico compatriot, tenor Jose Carreras, paleo- anthropologist Mervyn Leakey among others.

“It was a thrill to be at Wrigley Field. Its history is magnificent and its tradition of being magnificent is magnificent. To see where the ball fell to hell I’d brought my camera.”

**ACHIEVERS:**

**OTHER ACADemy members**

Benjamin C. Bradlee; Ernest and Ju- lian Gallow; Lester Crown; Dennis Hastert; Scott Turow; Gilly Gissips; Sue Garfinkel.

Dale Chihuly; Donna Karan; Mar- tha Stewart; Gunther Gebel-Williams; Pleasant T. Rowland; Carol Shields; Dr. Oliver Sacks; Lauren Hill; Maya Lin.

Tommy Hilfiger; Jeff Macke- lee; Mike Wallace; Frank Gehry; Tomoyasu Hoteh; President Ronald Reagan; Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

Jerry Reinsdorf; Patrick Ryan; Gene Siskel; Robert Trent Jones Jr.; Muhammad Ali; Sarah Jessica Parker.

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