Ladies and gentlemen,

We have been paying tribute to our best teachers and researchers since 1987, and since 2009, to our best students. We do so, on this stage, during this ceremony. We give our laureates a prominent place on our Wall of Fame next to the Senate Hall. They will in addition be pictured on the wall here. The Erasmus Trustfonds provides these laureates with a substantial grant for further scientific development. Universities are breeding grounds for talents. By awarding the best of the best, we hope to encourage others to follow their lead. It gives me great pleasure therefore to see the number of nominees increasing. The emergence of so many excellent nominees is a reason why the juries have decided also to award the accolade of honourable mention for each prize. You see here the names of the members of the various juries. They deserve our respect for their dedication to the difficult task of selecting the best, and a warm applause. So, let’s start the Award Ceremony 2012

**Jury Education Prizes**
- Prof.dr. H.G. Schmidt, rector magnificus, president
- O.F. Rikhof MA, secretary
- prof.dr. J. Jansz
- prof.dr. W. Hout
- Prof.dr. P.A. Dykstra
- S.A. Naessens
- Kruit
- Drs. R. Rijntjes, advisor
- Dr. G.J.A. Baars, advisor

**Jury Research Prizes**
- Prof.dr. H.G. Schmidt, rector magnificus, president
- O.F. Rikhof MA, secretary
- Prof dr. J. de Mul
- prof. dr. S.M.A. Bierma-Zeinstra
- Drs. R. Rijntjes, advisor
- J.P.A. Bruins, representative Bruins family
Professor Bruins prize

You will have seen among the names of the jury members the name of the great grandson of Professor Bruins, my predecessor as rector, now almost 100 years ago at the then Nederlandsche Handels-Hoogeschool.

The prize has been named after him. It is awarded to a research master student with excellent performance and research talent. The winner receives a substantial sum for study abroad, thanks to the Bruins family. **It is a great pleasure for us that you are here with us today, Marita Bruins!**

I should like to ask the winner of the Professor Bruins prize 2012, Johanna Thoma, to come forward. (....)

The nomination of Johanna Thoma for the prize reveals a clear focus and ambition. During her research master in Philosophy and Economics she carried out excellent work. Her ambition to professionalise her knowledge and skills in this domain will take her shortly to a PhD position in Toronto, Canada. Johanna, born in southern Germany, gained international experience at Oxford University where she was already one of the top students. Johanna is an excellent researcher in statu nascendi.

Alongside her interest in philosophy and economics she is also studying the violin at the Rotterdam conservatory and she is a member of the Netherlands Student Chamber Orchestra.

For her PhD she was able to choose from various leading institutes that were eager to have her. It is regrettable that she is exchanging Rotterdam for Toronto, but we are happy to give her the opportunity to use the Professor Bruins prize for her research for her doctorate.

The jury has also decided on an honourable mention of another candidate for the prize: Ilona Dekkers of Erasmus Medical Center. Ilona is an extremely motivated student with high marks and a clear goal in mind.

Research prize

The laureate for the research prize is Martijn Burger of the Erasmus School of Economics. Martijn has been assistant professor at the Erasmus School of Economics since 2011. In that year he was awarded his PhD cum laude. Earlier he had also completed two master degrees cum laude.

Alongside his PhD research he has quite a number of publications to his name as a first author, an excellent achievement. Most of these articles have been published in high profile journals.

Martijn has developed an original niche in the domain of economic geography and regional economics. He is regularly seen in various media talking about his research. According to the jury
Martijn is at the start of a very promising career. The Research prize 2012 has therefore been awarded to him.

An honourable mention is for Abbas Dehghan of the Erasmus Medical Center. The jury was impressed by his long list of publications and the quality of his many contributions.

**Professor Lambers prize**

That brings us to the Education prizes, beginning with the Professor Lambers prize. The prize is intended for an excellent student with two master’s degrees. The prize is named after the former rector magnificus, Henk Lambers, who was closely involved in the founding of Erasmus University in 1973, from the merger of the Nederlandse Economische Hogeschool and the Medical Faculty Rotterdam.

In 1981, Professor Lambers retired as Professor of Economics at Erasmus University. Alexander Rinnooy Kan took the initiative to establish this award several years ago. The winner receives a sum of money and a specially designed medal.

The Lambers prize 2012 goes to Abdelilah el Barzouhi of the Erasmus Medical Center. Abdelilah is a highly motivated student and researcher. In the past years he has completed his degree in Medicine as well as his master in Clinical Research and his master in Health Care Management. The marks he received were extremely high. He was also a participant in the Erasmus Honours Programme 2007 for our top talent and in 2009 he attended summer courses at the Harvard School of Public Health. He has meanwhile completed his clinical rotations and commenced upon his PhD. Abdelilah is on the brink of a highly promising career. As his motivation letter reveals, he is exploring the various angles from which we can look at health care. He also asks the question of how, with the same budget, we can cope with the growing demand for care without sacrificing quality. His various studies in any event provide him with the tools for looking for an answer to this difficult question. Abdelilah wants to pursue additional courses in statistics and study how care is organised elsewhere as part of his PhD-research. The university wishes to support him in this and is pleased therefore to award the Professor Lambers prize to Abdelilah el Barzouhi.

An honourable mention for the Professor Lambers prize goes to Han Tonino. The jury was struck above all by his unprecedentedly high marks.
The Education prize 2012, ladies and gentlemen, goes this year to Professor Axel Themmen of Erasmus Medical Center. He holds an endowed chair in experimental endocrinology and medical education. In addition, he is the head of the research group on Obesity and Diabetes Mellitus.

Axel Themmen is one of the developers of the decentralised selection procedure admitting high school students to medical school. Another name that springs to mind in this respect is Professor Ted Splinter, who retired several years ago. They started the spectacularly successful selection procedure in 2001. Professor Themmen and his co-workers have demonstrated that students who enter medical school through decentralised selection complete the Bachelor program faster, drop out less, and perform better in their clinical rotations. Decentralised selection for medicine here in Rotterdam has served as a model for the introduction of this approach in other programmes, both at Erasmus University and nation-wide. Moreover, Professor Themmen has initiated the Junior Med School at Erasmus Medical Center. Twenty talented secondary school students are given the opportunity of spending part of their time at Erasmus MC. If these prospective students do well they are automatically selected to study medicine. The Junior Med School can serve as an example to other programmes on how find talented students and bond them to our university. This is another illustration of the pioneering role that Axel Themmen is playing in the field of selection in higher education.

Honourable mention for the education prize goes to Dr. Peter Verkoeijen, associate professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences. Peter Verkoeijen is a pioneer in innovative statistics education and a first-rate educational reformer.

I would like to invite the chairman of the Erasmus Trustfonds, Bert Westendorp, to join me in awarding the prizes.