

IMPACT

The official magazine of the College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology

Featured article:
MEEMONG LEE

2009-2010



CEAT Confers Highest Honor

The College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology established the Lohmann Medal presentation in 1991 in honor of Melvin R. "Pete" Lohmann, who served at OSU for 36 years. While dean from 1955 to 1977, he led the college to national prominence while providing leadership in the movement to adopt the professional school concept in engineering education.

Largely because of his service as president of the Engineers Council for Professional Development and the American Society for Engineering Education, Lohmann became a national advocate for the professional school model for engineering education, a model with many characteristics of law and medicine schools. The engineering programs at OSU today include many elements of the model Lohmann espoused.

Lohmann Medal 2009

The 2009 Lohmann Medal recipients are Meemong Lee and Richard Weidner, alumni of the OSU School of Electrical and Computer Engineering and principal engineers with Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, Calif., where they have served for more than 20 years.



Meemong Lee

Meemong Lee was born in Junjoo, South Korea, at a servant quarter of Kyungkee Palace rented out to the public during the Korean War. Her father studied Western philosophy and her mother studied English literature in college.

Influenced by President Park's emphasis on electronics engineering while she was in high school, Lee became only the second female student in the electronics engineering bachelor's degree program at Sogang University in Seoul, South Korea.

Student demonstrations and marshal law marked her time at Sogang, and her only real passion was for playing the guitar and piano until she saw a newspaper article on computer technology in America. This had a major impact on the direction of her studies.

Despite her parents' wishes that she be married first, Lee chose to pursue a master's degree in computer science at OSU, a place her parents felt safe in sending their daughter. Perhaps an indication of the male dominated discipline she chose to pursue, her 1976 letter of admission from OSU began "Dear Sir."

She continued her OSU education by pursuing a Ph.D. in electrical engineering under the guidance of Rao Yarlagadda, an expert in digital signal processing. It was during this time she met Richard Weidner, another electrical engineering doctoral student. Thanks to Yarlagadda, Lee became one of only a few Ph.Ds. knowledgeable in speech signal processing — an accomplishment that took her to Intel Corporation in 1981.

At Intel, she worked with Ted Hoff, who invented the first 4-bit microprocessor and developed the automated speech transaction system. In 1983, she joined Weidner at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., excited to have an opportunity to work for NASA.

There she went to work with pioneers in the field of digital image processing and advanced image analysis systems, where she specialized in multidisciplinary modeling and simulation technology and advanced imaging techniques. Her work at Jet Propulsion Laboratory includes the Voyager II, Magellan, Galileo, Deep Space I, Mars Odyssey and the JUNO missions.

In 1986, she received the NASA Manned Flight Awareness Certificate of Appreciation for her contributions to the Challenger investigation. In 1989, NASA awarded her its Exceptional Service Medal for supporting the Voyager II and Neptune Encounter, and in 2002, AIAA honored her with its Space Science Award for Deep Space I Comet Borrelly.

Lee resides in Pasadena, Calif., with her husband and collaborator Richard Weidner, where she continues her 26-year career at Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

student digest

research, teaching,
outreach

alumni success

noteworthy

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