

News

AMPAS Recognizes Major Industry Contributions and Outstanding Service at its 71st Annual Awards Presentation Dinner

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences presented an Oscar statuette and the John A. Bonner Medal of Commendation, along with 34 other awards for scientific and technical achievements at its 71st annual technical awards presentation dinner on February 27, 1999 at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel. Scientific and Technical awards were given for devices, methods, formulas, discoveries, or inventions of special and outstanding value to the arts and sciences of motion pictures, and also have demonstrated a proven history of use in the motion picture industry. The awards were voted by the Academy's Board of Governors, based upon recommendations from the Scientific and Technical Awards Committee, chaired by SMPTE Governor Edmund M. DiGiulio.

Avid Film Composer Wins Oscar Statuette

The Oscar statuette (Academy Award of Merit), which is given for basic achievements that have a definite influence upon the advancement of the industry, was presented to Avid Technology Inc., for the concept, system design, and engineering of the Avid Film Composer for motion picture editing. The Avid Film Composer is a digital, nonlinear, 24 frame-per-second editing machine using compression algorithms that has revolutionized the art of film editing. Shots can be stored, recalled, manipulated, and played back instantaneously, allowing the film editor unprecedented creative freedom and the ability to realize a film more fully than before.

Bonner Medal Awarded to SMPTE's David W. Gray

The Bonner Medal, established in 1977, is named in honor of the late director of special projects at Warner Hollywood Studios. It was presented to David W. Gray in appreciation for his outstanding service and dedication in upholding the high standards of the Academy. Gray has been a member of the Academy since 1984, and currently is serving on the Scientific and Technical Awards Committee, the Sound Branch Executive Committee, and as chairman of the Theater Standards Committee.

Gray was also the 1994 recipient of SMPTE's Samuel L. Warner Award for contributions to motion picture sound. He

is active in both SMPTE and the Audio Engineering Society (AES), serving on numerous committees.

After completing his studies at Montana State University and Windham College, Gray spent ten years building custom electronics and handling electronic repair for music artists such as The Kinks, Orleans, The Mahavashnu Orchestra, Steely Dan and Frank Zappa. He joined Dolby Laboratories in 1980 as an applications engineer in the Los Angeles office and has held his current position as vice-president, Hollywood Film Production, since 1993.

Academy Plaques

Scientific and Engineering Award (Academy plaques) are given for achievements that exhibit a high level of engineering and are important to the progress of the industry. The following were recipients:

- Dr. Thomas G. Stockham, Jr. and Robert B. Ingebreten were recognized for their pioneering work in the areas of waveform editing, crossfades, and cut-and-paste techniques for digital audio editing. The foundation of current digital audio editing equipment for motion pictures has its roots in the late 1970s work of these digital pioneers.

- James A. Moorer was recognized for his pioneering work in the design of digital signal processing and its application to audio editing for film. This early work in systems architecture and software has had a significant impact on the digital creation of sound effects and the editing of audio for motion picture sound tracks.

- Stephen J. Kay was acknowledged for the design and development of the Shock Block. This specially designed ground fault interrupter eliminates the electric shock hazard when working in water, wet conditions, or from an accidentally exposed power line.

- Gary Tregaskis was chosen for the primary design, and Dominique Boisvert, Phillippe Panzini, and Andre LeBlanc for the development and implementation of the Flame and Inferno software. The Inferno System and its predecessor, Flame, provide high-speed, efficient integrated digital compositing and visual effects tools.

- Robert Predovich, John Scott, Ken Husain, and Cameron Shearer were recognized for the design and implementation of the Soundmaster Integrated Operations Nucleus operating environment. This system provides motion picture audio post-production facilities with a completely

integrated capability for synchronization of audio and picture elements with the numerous methods of synchronization in use today.

- Roy Ference, Steve Schmidt, Richard J. Federico, Rocky Yarid, and Mike McCrackan were acknowledged for the design and development of the Kodak Lightning Laser Recorder. The laser recorder system has established higher operational and quality standards and achieved wide industry acceptance for digital film recording onto intermediate film stock.

- Colin Mossman, Hans Leisinger, and George John Rowland were chosen for the concept and design of the Deluxe High-Speed Spray Film Cleaner. This innovative and effective machine is unique in its use of spray technology, providing the flexibility to use alternative solvents and to anticipate changes in environmental legislation.

- ARRI USA, Inc., was chosen for the concept, and the engineering staff of Arnold & Richter Cine Technik under the direction of Walter Trauninger were recognized for the engineering of the ARRI 435 Camera System. The 435 enhances the creative process via its programmability and reliability and provides the camera operator with the widest feature and performance capability of any MOS camera in use today.

- Arnold & Richter Cine Technik and the Carl Zeiss Company were chosen for the concept and optical design of the Carl Zeiss/Arriflex Variable Prime Lenses. This series of lenses opens many creative possibilities, since any focal length can be continuously selected throughout the entire range. They offer sharp, high-contrast, high-resolution images with minimized vignetting, superior to many prime lenses.

- Derek C. Lightbody was recognized for the design and development of Aurasoft luminaires. The Aurasoft offers a radical new type of reflector design for the production of soft, very even, and relatively shadowless light, with superior coverage and significantly higher intensity than existing softlights.

- Mark Roberts, Ronan Carroll, Assaff Rawner, Paul Bartlett, and Simon Wakley were recognized for the creation of the Milo Motion-Control Crane. This radically original and effective solution to the problems of high-speed camera motion was achieved with the combination of novel geometry and dedicated 3-D control software.

- Michael Sorensen, Richard Alexander, and Donald Trumbull were acknowledged for advancing the state-of-the-art of realtime motion-control, as exemplified in the Gazelle and Zebra camera dolly systems. Over the past decade, Sorensen, Alexander, and Trumbull have improved the speed, repeatability, and portability of robotic camera platforms through novel engineering concepts and the pioneering use of composite materials.

- Ronald E. Uhlig, Thomas F. Powers, and Fred M. Fuss were chosen for the design and development of KeyCode latent-image barcode key numbers. KeyCode numbers are machine-readable bar codes on camera negative film that exactly replicate the human-readable key numbers. Together with an appropriate reader and database software, they reduce errors and speed important post-production operations, leading to significant cost-savings.

- Iain Neil was chosen for the optical design, Takuo Miyagishima for the mechanical design, and Panavision, Inc., for the concept and development of the Primo Series of spherical prime lenses for 35mm cinematography. This represents a thorough and comprehensive approach to prime lens design, development, and manufacture. This family of lenses has a wide range of focal length, all color matched, with improved modulation transfer function characteristics.

Academy Certificates

Technical Achievement Awards (Academy certificates) are given for those accomplishments that contribute to the progress of the industry. The following were recipients:

- Garrett Brown and Jerry Holway were acknowledged for the creation of the Skyman flying platform for Steadicam operators. This cable-driven, manned camera platform allows the operator to spin 360° for unimpeded pans while controlling the downhill speed via brakes. As a device for achieving otherwise impossible shots, Skyman has had a definite influence on later cable-suspended camera systems.

- James Rodnunsky, James Webber, Bob Webber, and Thornton Bayliss were chosen for the design and engineering of Cablecam. This radio-controlled, cable-driven camera platform with its ultra-smooth synthetic cables and powerful hydraulic motors, enables runs in excess of 3,000 ft with quick return to start. Operating unmanned, it can function at speeds and through perils that would be unsafe for on-board operators.

- David DiFrancesco, N. Balasubramanian, and Thomas L. Noggle were recognized for their pioneering efforts in the development of laser film recording technology. The pioneering laser film recorder, designed and used for motion pictures, demonstrated the potential of this technology for recording digital data onto intermediate film stock.

- Michael MacKenzie, Mike Bolles, Udo Pampel, and Joseph Fulmer were recognized for their pioneering work in motion-controlled, silent camera dollies. This silent, high-speed motion control modification of a Panther dolly makes it possible to film moving-camera composite shots of actors while recording live dialogue.

- Barry Walton, Bill Schultz, Chris Barker, and David Cornelius were chosen for the creation of an advanced motion-controlled, silent camera dolly. This extensive modification to the Panther dolly allows high-speed moves to be silent, smooth, and stable.

- Bruce Wilton and Carlos Icinhoff were acknowledged for their modular system of motion-control rotators and movers for use in motion control. These components have become the de facto industry standard for use in precision motion-control equipment.

- Remy Smith was recognized for the software and electronic design and development, and James K. Branch and Nasir J. Zaidi for the design and development of the Spectra Professional IV-A digital exposure meter. The design and execution of this equipment has resulted in a practical and successful tool for the film production community.

- Ivan Kruglak was recognized for his commitment to the development of a wireless transmission system for video-assisted images for the motion picture industry. Through years of persistent effort, Kruglak has commercialized and popularized a technique of great utility for motion picture camera operations. By introducing diversity antennas and a time code insertion accessory, he has optimized camera wireless video-assist components.

- Dr. Douglas R. Roble was recognized for his contribution to tracking technology and for the design and implementation of the TRACK system for camera position calculation and scene reconstruction. The TRACK system is an integrated software tool that uses computer-vision techniques to extract critical 2-D and 3-D information about a scene and the camera used to film it.

- Thaddeus Beier was acknowledged for the design and implementation of *ras_track*, a system for 2-D tracking, stabilization, and 3-D camera and object tracking. *Ras_track* allows the user to determine the position and location of the camera and objects in a scene by tracking points in a scanned sequence.

- Manfred N. Klemme and Donald E. Wetzel were recognized for the design and development of the K-Tek Microphone Boom Pole and accessories for on-set motion picture sound recording. This tool provides production-recording personnel with a self-lubricated, lightweight, sturdy pole with multiple accessories.

- Nick Foster was acknowledged for his software development in the field of water simulation systems. This software technique provides an efficient and flexible method for the creation of flowing streams, oceans, tidal

waves, and turbulence for motion picture visual effects.

- Cary Phillips was chosen for the design and development of the "Caricature" Animation System at Industrial Light & Magic. By integrating existing tools into a powerful interactive system, and adding an expressive multi-target shape interpolation-based freeform animation system, the "Caricature" system provided a degree of subtlety and refinement not possible with other systems.

- Dr. Mitch Bogdanowicz, Jim Meyers, and Stan Miller were acknowledged for the design of the CalColor Calibrated Color Effects Filters. Designed to correspond to the spectral sensitivity of color-negative film stocks, these filters provide improved color control in motion picture lighting.

- Dr. Carl F. Holtz, David F. Kopperl, Dr. A. Tulsi Ram, and Richard C. Sehlin were acknowledged for the research and development of the concept of molecular sieves applied to improve the archival properties of processed photographic film. The use of zeolite crystals as molecular sieves to absorb moisture, acetic acid, methylene chloride, and a variety of solvents created an effective deterrent to the effects of vinegar syndrome in stored film stock.

- Takuo Miyagishima and Albert K. Saiki were chosen for the design and development of the Eyepiece Leveler. This leveler keeps the camera eyepiece at the same level, regardless of whether the camera position is tilted up or down, enabling the camera operator to concentrate on the composition of the image.

- Edmund M. DiGiulio and James Bartell were recognized for the design of the KeyCode Sync Reader. This tool provides a fast, accurate, and user-friendly means of utilizing the KeyCode information on film, thereby expediting the editorial and post-production processes.

- Ivan Kruglak was recognized for his pioneering concept and development of the Coherent Time Code Slate. Time code slates have had significant impact on the filmmaking process by simplifying post-production. This development makes the synchronization process faster and more precise, particularly when multiple cameras are used.

- Mike Denecke was acknowledged for refining and further developing electronic time code slates. Due to their features and simplified operational procedures, the Denecke slates have had significant impact on the motion picture industry and have become the standard for electronic time code slates.

- Ed Zwaneveld, Frederick Gasoi, Mihal Lazaridis, and Dale Brubacher-Cressman were chosen for the design and development of the DigiSync Film KeyCode reader. This tool provides fast, accurate, and user-friendly means of utilizing the KeyCode information on film, expediting the editorial and post-production processes.