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2005 Engelberger Robotics Awards Honor Four Industry Leaders

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ANN ARBOR, Michigan—The robotic industry's highest honor, the Engelberger Robotics Awards, were presented to four of its pioneers at the 36th International Symposium on Robotics, December 1, in Tokyo, Japan. The awards honor significant achievements in the areas of application, technology development, education, and leadership. It is named after the "father of robotics," Joseph F. Engelberger, who presented the award to each of the recipients, along with Robotic Industries Association Executive Vice President, Donald Vincent.

The 2005 Engelberger Robotics Award winners, by category are:

Leadership
Craig S. Jennings
President and COO
Motoman Inc.
West Carrollton, Ohio, United States

As President and COO of Motoman Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Yaskawa Electric America, Craig Jennings has built the company into an industrial robot powerhouse. He also had the foresight to move Motoman into applications in medical robots, including more than 100 robots dispensing prescriptions, manipulating cancer patients in front of proton treatment machines, and service robotics, such as the RoboBar, a robotic bartender. As a Past President of the Robotic Industries Association and a member of the RIA Board for nearly a decade, Jennings has been a devoted advocate for the industry, giving numerous industry presentations, writing articles, and taking the lead role in organizing an industry effort to reverse improper tariffs levied on industrial robots by the U.S. Customs Department. The industry saved millions of dollars as a result of this effort. Mr. Jennings also was one of the key architects of a revolutionary change in the RIA membership structure which has taken RIA from 90 members a decade ago to some 245 member companies today.

Application
Arturo Baroncelli
Strategic Planning & Business Development, Market & Business Coordinator
Comau
Turin, Italy

Joining Comau in 1988, Arturo Baroncelli developed an impressive number of innovative applications in areas such as arc and spot welding, press tending, and material handling.

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He currently serves as Strategic Planning & Business Development, Market & Business Coordinator, and has been actively involved in the application of hundreds of robot cells, including the award winning MIRS Project at Pirelli Tire. Many of the applications were a result of new products Baroncelli helped launch, which allowed robots to spread into new fields, including his pioneering work with parallel kinematic robots. Mr. Baroncelli also has been a strong voice for robotics as a member of the Board of the Italian Society of Industrial Robotics since 1997, helping encourage robot use throughout Italy and Europe.

Education

Delbert Tesar, Ph.D.
Carol Cockrell Curran Chair in Engineering, Director of the Robotics Research Group
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas, United States

Delbert Tesar has been extremely active in robotics for some 40 years. At the University of Texas at Austin, he leads the largest robotics research group in mechanical engineering at a United States university. To date, Dr. Tesar's program has generated 53 Ph.Ds and 129 Masters of Science, and he has written 90 position papers, 215 refereed conference and journal papers, and given more than 500 invited lectures. He also holds several U.S. patents. Tesar has established a unique open architecture for robots and manufacturing cells to be assembled on demand using standardized actuators as building blocks on one universal system software to operate all assembled systems. He has shown a true commitment to national service as well, having served on various U.S. Air Force and National Research Council committees for 30 years. Dr. Tesar's research has focused on the need to produce higher performance production machines at lower costs for value added manufacturing to create new opportunities for U.S. business development and employment.

Technology Development

Dr. Masakazu Ejiri
(Retired) Senior Chief Research Scientist, Corporate Technology, Central Research Laboratory
Hitachi, Ltd,
Tokyo, Japan

After an impressive 40-year career at Hitachi in Japan, Masakazu Ejiri retired from the robotics industry in 2003. He leaves a legacy of outstanding technology developments in the areas of control engineering, robotics, pattern recognition, machine vision and artificial intelligence. Dr. Ejiri's most famous achievement was the development of the world's first computer controlled fully automatic transistor assembly system using innovative machine vision technology in 1973. Ejiri pioneered work on an intelligent robot that assembles objects from plan drawings. His work has generated more than 200 patent applications. Dr. Ejiri's work has been widely recognized throughout the world, which is why he is a Fellow of the IEEE, the IAPR, the IEICE, and the RSJ, the Robotics Society of Japan. He also served as President of the Robotics Society of Japan from 2001-2003.

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The Engelberger Robotics Awards are presented annually by the Robotic Industries Association. Founded in 1974, RIA represents some 245 North American companies actively involved in robotics. Each award winner receives a $4,000 honorarium and a commemorative medallion. Since its inception in 1977, the award has been presented to 97 innovative individuals from 15 countries.

Donald A. Vincent, RIA Executive Vice President, said of the 2005 award winners, "The award recipients this year have significantly advanced robot technology and systems. Their contributions have led to the application of robots in new fields and to a host of innovative manufacturing developments and opportunities. RIA is pleased to recognize this cross-section of international leaders."

RIA is now accepting nominations for the 2006 Engelberger Robotics Awards, to be presented in Munich, Germany during the 37th International Symposium on Robotics and AUTOMATICA, May 16-19, 2006. For more details about the award, or to submit a nomination, contact RIA Headquarters at 734/994-6088, or visit www.roboticsonline.com.

Note: Photos of award recipients available on request.

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