From the Guest Editor: Introduction to the History Project

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SIGGRAPH 98 History Chair

The SIGGRAPH history project was initiated to commemorate SIGGRAPH's 25th conference. It was meant to look mainly on the 1974 through 1998 era (from SIGGRAPH's first conference to its 25th), but occasionally it moves outside those boundaries (not being afraid to color outside the lines!). The focus inside this issue of *Computer Graphics* documents most of what is in the SIGGRAPH 98 history events.

In this kind of a history project we've called on a number of our knowledgeable, talented and opinionated colleagues to help us choose the people, events and technology that we would like to particularly note. The marvelous people who worked with us on this project are most definitely not cold, aloof historians. Rather they are warm-blooded toilers in the field who have deep, intimate knowledge of what computer graphics has been over the last two and a half decades.

Many of our choices for what was to be included were "no-brainers." As soon as one mentions computer graphics, things obviously come to mind. In some other cases, our choices may seem idiosyncratic and they probably are. They reflect the biases and enthusiasms of the various folks who were involved in this project.

The bottom line is that at SIGGRAPH 98, we hope you enjoy roaming through our Time Tunnel, Equipment, Awards, Great Labs and Family Trees exhibits, visiting the Digital Campfire, trading our Trading Cards, perusing our Seminal Papers publication and savoring all the other flotsam that characterize our industry. The Time Tunnel and Era Exhibits will include guest books. We encourage all attendees to sign these books and comment...what they liked and disliked, what they thought should have been included (or left out) and any other suggestions. We'd like the celebration to be the beginning, not the end, of recording our history.

Briefly, our celebration history projects include:

- Exhibits of 60s, 70s and 80s hardware, software and systems
- Memorabilia including posters, buttons, badges and programs
- Original Documents
- Academy™ and other awards
- Seminal papers compilation
- Best Parties
- Digital Campfire
- Birthday Party
- Great Labs
- Family Trees
- Time Tunnel
- Portraits of Computer Graphics
- Trading Cards
- Video Teleconference among Orlando, Smithsonian and England
- Classic art and animation

Many of these are described in greater detail later in this issue.

This history project could not have been accomplished without the vision and enthusiastic support of Walt Bransford, SIGGRAPH 98 Conference Chair, and Steve Cunningham, SIGGRAPH Chair. Our history subchairs who carried out the vision include:

- *Awards:* Tom Brigham, Sightline Systems.
- *Digital Campfire:* Celia Pearce.
- *Family Trees:* Dr. Norman Badler, University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Roger W. Webster and Holly Mohler, Millersville University.
- *Great Labs:* Dr. Robert J. McDermott, University of Utah: Dr. David B. Arnold, UEA.
- *Memorabilia:* Mary C. Whitton, The University of North Carolina and Whitland Associates.
- *Portraits Of Computer Graphics:* Dr. Bertram Herzog, University of Michigan and Fraunhofer Center for Research in Computer Graphics.
- *Seminal Papers:* Dr. Rosalee Wolfe, DePaul University.
- *Video Teleconference/Smithsonian:* Dr. David K. Allison and Karin Lee, National Museum of American History.
- *Video Teleconference/British:* Prof. David B. Arnold, UEA; Tony Sweeney, National Museum of Photograph Film & Television.

Others who played important roles in the history project include: Richard M. Mueller, Grand Casinos, Inc.; Dawn M. Saunders, Loyola High School; Richard L. Davison, Dolch Computer Systems; Judson Rosebush, Judson Rosebush Company; Allan P. Frankel, Digital Equipment Corp.; Dr. Robin Williams, IBM; Dr. Richard Phillips, retired; Joan Truckenbrod, Art Institute of Chicago; Ines Hardtke, National Film Board of Canada; Dr. Rae Earnshaw, University of Bradford; Dr. Katsuhire Yamaguchi, Tokyo; Lauren Herr and Natalie Van Osdol, Pacific Interface Inc.; Mk Haley, Disney Imagineering. Dr. Gershon Elber, Technion, Israel Institute of Technology provided the flat-pattern to construct the Utah teapot (see the URL, **http://www.siggraph.org/S98/conference/teapot**).

The history effort was superbly coordinated by our History Project Administrator, Alyce Branum.

We are especially grateful to the folks who graciously and generously lent us equipment, memorabilia and other material. These include: Dr. Gwen Bell, Dr. Oliver Strimple and Dag Spicer, The Computer Museum; Dr. Jose Encarnação, University of Darmstadt; Brad Holtz, WBH Associates; Scott Duncan, Disney; John Fujii, Hewlett-Packard; Earl Schweppe, University of Kansas; Marla Schweppe, RIT; Dave Tubbs, Evans &Sutherland; Dave Sieg, Tricon; Art Olson, Scripps Research Institute; Dr. Dave Rogers, U.S. Naval Academy; Dr. Andy van Dam, Brown University; Dana M. Plepys, EECS/UIC; Dr. Fred Brooks, University of North Carolina; David Kasik, Boeing; John Foust, Viewpoint; Dr. Rosalee Wolfe, DePaul University; Dr. Dick Phillips; David Em; Nancy Burson; Dr. Julian Gomez.; Mrs. Alvy Ray; Pat Cole; and Hewlett-Packard.

The SIGGRAPH contractors Smith, Bucklin & Associates, Inc.; AVW Audio Visual, Inc.; Capstone Management Group, Inc.; Hall-Erickson, Inc.; Q LTD; Flying Colors; and Freeman Decorating Company gave us the imaginative and professional help we needed to execute our vision. We also thank the student volunteers organized by Joe Lohmar who work in our booths and exhibits.

Several of the SIGGRAPH 98 exhibitors are showing some of their early equipment also. The *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* published a SIGGRAPH 98 celebration-oriented issue, (April-June 1998).

It's been my continuing pleasure and good

fortune to work with Gordon Cameron, *Computer Graphics* Editor, and Karen Sullivan, *Computer Graphics* Cover Editor, in producing this special documentary issue of the quarterly. Gordon went "beyond the call of duty" so that we could complete this issue in time for the SIGGRAPH 98 conference. Thanks again, Gordon!!

I know I must have inadvertently left out others who played an important role in our 25th celebration. Thanks to you also, and please accept my heartfelt apology.

In conjunction with the 25th conference celebration, SIGGRAPH has also embarked on the production of a full-length movie entitled *The Story of Computer Graphics*. This movie, which is planned to premier at SIGGRAPH 99 (SIGGRAPH's 30th anniversary), will focus on how computer graphics has impacted the way we do almost everything! See page 75-76 for more information on this exciting project.

One final thought. When I started this project about two years ago, I assumed all of my colleagues were "pack rats" just as I am, and that finding old hardware, software, systems and other "flotsam" would be a "snap." Instead, I found that generally we eat our young and make no attempt to preserve our past. Perhaps projects like this will make us more sensitive to the need to retain our heritage.

Carl Machover is President of Machover Associates Corporation, a consultancy providing services to computer graphics users, suppliers and investors. He has been interested and involved in the field of CG for many years, written numerous articles and conducted a number of seminars. Machover is Editor of the *CAD/CAM Handbook* (McGraw Hill, 1996) and serves on the editorial board of several publications.

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