

Distinguished Engineering Alumni Awards

The College of Engineering and Applied Science has selected four outstanding alumni to receive the 2011 Distinguished Engineering Alumni Award. Dean Robert Davis will present the awards at the annual Engineering Awards Banquet on April 29.



BIRKAN

Mitat Birkan—Government Service

Mitat Birkan has been manager of the U.S. Air Force Office of Scientific Research program on space propulsion and power since 1987. In this position, he is responsible for an \$8 million basic research program of significant interest to our nation, assuring the excellence and relevance of a broad research portfolio.

Birkan has assembled an eminent group of scientists to participate in the study of electric propulsion, chemical rocket propulsion, and plume signature characteristics, and numerous U.S. governmental agencies and organizations rely on his technical expertise in these areas. He has been an active contributor to Air Force space missions by transitioning research results to the development of space hardware, and he has established significant collaborations with related research agencies in France, Germany, Russia, and Brazil.

He also is actively involved in teaching, having lectured at George Washington University throughout the 1990s, and at the University of California, Davis from 1984 to 1987.

He earned his PhD in mechanical engineering at CU-Boulder in 1984, after receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees at the Technical University of Istanbul.

Dan Hernandez—Industry and Commerce

Dan Hernandez has served as an executive leader in the fields of telecommunications, customer service, and business process outsourcing. He is a dynamic, highly sought speaker who has inspired countless underrepresented and disadvantaged youth to pursue their dreams.

Since 2003, he has been executive vice president for global strategy at Sykes Enterprises, Inc., a worldwide business process outsourcer that specializes in the operation of customer contact centers. He oversees corporate development, including mergers, acquisitions, and strategic partnerships and alliances, in addition to product development, marketing, public relations, and community service for the Tampa, Florida-based company. Before joining Sykes in 2003, Hernandez held engineering leadership positions at U S West, Ameritech, and SBC Communications—positions that also involved leading-edge technology and business processes in a highly competitive environment.

Throughout his career, he also has provided exemplary leadership for the College of Engineering and Applied Science, serving on the Engineering Advisory Council and playing a leading role in planning the college's diversity strategy. He earned his bachelor's degree in electrical and computer engineering at CU-Boulder in 1990.



HERNANDEZ



STOLARCZYK

Larry Stolarczyk—Research and Invention

As the founder and president of Stolar Research Corporation, Larry Stolarczyk has made extensive and pioneering contributions to the field of electromagnetic remote sensing, including the development of radio imaging method (RIM) technology for underground mining and detection of anti-personnel landmines.

Stolarczyk has been awarded more than 40 patents related to electromagnetic sensing to bring about safer, more environmentally friendly coal mining, and technologies related to military applications. He received NASA's Space Act Award for his method of locating concealed objects, and the National Award for Energy Innovation presented by the secretary of energy.

Since 1994, he has served as president of Stolar, a multimillion-dollar research and development company in Raton, New Mexico, specializing in mine communication. Stolar has won numerous technical and business awards, including six R&D 100 awards, 11 New Mexico Technology Flying 40 Awards, and two New Mexico Business Weekly Fast Trackers Awards.

Stolarczyk earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at CU-Boulder in 1960, and went on to earn master's and doctor of science degrees at New Mexico State University.

Xiaodong Zhang—Education, Research, and Invention

Xiaodong Zhang is an outstanding scientist who serves as chair of the Computer Science and Engineering Department at Ohio State University and holds the Robert M. Critchfield Professorship in Engineering.

He is best known for his research in memory systems, which is both fundamental to system design and applicable to production implementation, directly impacting and contributing to the advancement of computer systems. He has co-authored several influential algorithms and their system implementations, which have been widely adopted in mainstream operating and database systems and in commercial processors.

Before joining Ohio State in 2006, Zhang was the chair of computer science at the College of William and Mary, where he taught from 1997 to 2005. From 2001 to 2004, he was on leave to serve as a program director at the National Science Foundation, where he started several research initiatives.

He earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at Beijing University of Technology in 1982, and then came to CU-Boulder, where he received his master's and PhD degrees in computer science in 1985 and 1989.



ZHANG