

Carnegie Mellon

Department of Media Relations

Carnegie Mellon University

Alumni House

Pittsburgh, PA 15213

412-268-2900

Fax: 412-268-6929

Contact: Anne Watzman or Gretchen Underwood
412-268-3830 or 412-268-4290

Embargoed

For Release

6:30 p.m., June 17, 2004

Carnegie Mellon University Announces 2004 Inductees into The Robot Hall of Fame™

PITTSBURGH—Five robots will be inducted into Carnegie Mellon University's Robot Hall of Fame™ in a ceremony to be held on October 11, 2004, at the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh.

ASIMO, the world's most advanced humanoid robot, and Shakey the Robot, the first mobile robot able to reason about its actions, will be honored for their scientific achievements. Astroboy, C3PO and Robby the Robot will be honored for their fictional characters and their real inspiration. The robots were selected by a jury that includes leaders in technology-related fields.

"The jury discussed this year's candidates at length and has made some excellent choices," said Professor of Computer Science James H. Morris, former dean of Carnegie Mellon's School of Computer Science and founder of the Robot Hall of Fame. "I'm happy to see some older, historically important robots like Shakey and Robby joining the newer ones like ASIMO and C3PO."

ASIMO, developed by Honda Motor Co. Ltd., drew juror support as one of the most successful humanoid robots ever created.

"When we look back, the Honda P2 Robot, from which ASIMO was developed, is THE one which ignited the current fever of humanoid and entertainment robots," said Takeo Kanade, UA and Helen Whitaker University Professor of Computer Science and Robotics at Carnegie Mellon and juror for the 2004 induction.

Morris supported ASIMO because, "it was the first to demonstrate real human-like walking along with vision."

He noted that a key purpose of the Robot Hall of Fame is to acknowledge the work of the early pioneers in robotics so that it will not be forgotten.

"I feel that the Robot Hall of Fame should give credit to the early scientific and engineering accomplishments, which set foundations for further work in the robotic field," said juror Ruzena Bacjys, director, CITRIS, University of California, Berkeley.

Shakey the Robot was created in 1969. Juror Illah Nourbakhsh, robotics group lead at NASA/Ames Research Center and associate professor of robotics at Carnegie Mellon's Robotics Institute, called it "an earth-shaking early robot."

“Shakey already sported a full planning system, a wireless video system and visual interpretation of its scene, visual obstacle avoidance and the ability to manipulate the world via pushing. It even had a multi-level, tiered-control architecture very similar to what many have settled upon today. In other words, it was way ahead of its time and set a standard for a great many years,” Nourbakhsh explained.

The Robot Hall of Fame honors robots from science fiction as well as science. “It should not exist merely to honor early technology development,” said Steve Wozniak, CEO, Wheels of Zeus, and co-founder, Apple, Inc. “It should also reward early inspirations that help robots make it among us. Science fiction robots are included and honor this achievement.”

The Japanese Astroboy (also known in the early years as Atom Boy) received well-deserved juror support. Astroboy, the animation of a robot with a soul, was created by Osamu Tezuka in 1951.

“Astroboy should be inducted because of its extraordinary impact on Japanese culture, including on the socialization of generations to a future in which robotics are a part of everyday life,” said juror Sherry Turkle, director of Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Initiative on Technology and Self. “Through the filter of both Japanese culture and industrial production, Astroboy has come to have a global reach.”

C3PO will join his beloved colleague R2-D2, included in last year’s charter class of inductees into the Robot Hall of Fame. The cheerful and well-intentioned robot is primarily known for his innocent bumbling and his incessant chatter.

“Along with R2-D2, C3PO is one of the most memorable characters from the Star Wars series,” Morris said. “He demonstrates many appealing human traits. And, he received the most nominations from the public on the Robot Hall of Fame Web site. As jurors, we felt we needed to acknowledge that popular support.”

Robby the Robot also received significant support on the Hall of Fame Web site.

Joanna Haas, director of the Carnegie Science Center, which is home to the Robot Hall of Fame, explained that this robot, from MGM’s “Forbidden Planet,” became the iconic image of all science-fiction robots of the classic 1950s films and beyond. “It was the first robot with a ‘personality’ conveyed through motion and timing,” Haas said.

For their amazing inspiration and accomplishments, as well as the reasons stated above by the Hall of Fame jurors, these five robots will be honored on October 11, 2004, with induction into the Robot Hall of Fame.

For more information on the Robot Hall of Fame and a list of the 2003 inductees, see <http://www.robothalloffame.org>.

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