

CAD Society Announces Richard Sowar as the winner of the 2009 CAD Society Lifetime Achievement Award

A lifetime of excellence in 3D solid modeling, surfacing and kernel development recognized by the members

April 6, 2009, Denver, CO – The CAD Society today announced that Richard Sowar is the winner of the CAD Society’s Lifetime Achievement Award.

The CAD Society Awards acknowledge the contributions made by individuals that have affected and developed the CAD, engineering, manufacturing and architecture software industries. The Lifetime Achievement award recognizes a lifetime of outstanding technical and business contributions to the CAD industry.

Dick Sowar is most well known for his CAD industry-leading influence by co-founding Spatial Technology. Spatial developed the ACIS 3D geometric modeler, and first introduced ACIS to the market in 1989. Dick organized the key underlying development relationship with Three-Space Ltd. of Cambridge, England where the ACIS kernel was created. He also organized component developers worldwide to create kernel extensions that were distributed with ACIS to corporations, developers and academic institutions, enabling the rapid development of 3D CAD applications. Spatial also developed a series of translators and tools that further allowed developers to build interoperability into their CAD systems, and the kernels and tools have been used at some point by almost every CAD developer in the industry. As CEO, Dick led Spatial to an IPO in 1996.

But his influence extends further: Dick was a computer graphics pioneer, starting his studies in computer graphics and 3D in 1967 while researching and teaching at the Air Force Institute of Technology. He subsequently enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of Colorado. Dick left academia in 1980 to become part of the founding team at Graftek, a company that led the movement of CAD/CAM to 32 bit computing and solid modeling. He founded Spatial in 1986, and, with the shared vision with the ACIS development team in the UK and the developers at Spatial’s Boulder, CO location, proceeded to change the market. After the sale of the ACIS business to Dassault Systems in 2000, Dick has co-founded 2 additional companies – Geomenon, and then FreeDesign, the latter of which has developed a novel and innovative approach to 3D modeling using curve-based design built on the company’s patented N-sided surface technology.

Rachael Taggart, acting President of the CAD Society said. “The CAD Society is pleased to be able to recognize Dick’s lifetime of achievement in CAD. Back in the early 1980s, Dick realized how significant a technology such as ACIS could be on the market and he delivered the vision, tools and structure to make it available industry-wide. His influence has been felt on the market for more than 20 years and even now, he continues to develop ground-breaking technologies such as Free Design’s N-sided Surfacing technology.”

Dick Sowar joins an illustrious list of recipients of this award including Mike Riddle, Dean Kamen, Russell F. Henke, Ken Versprille, L. Stephen Wolfe, Carl Machover, Dr. Joel Orr, and Patrick Hanratty.

The awards will be presented at COFES (Congress On the Future of Engineering Software), this year scheduled for April 16-19 2009 in Scottsdale, AZ.

About The CAD Society

The CAD Society (www.cadsociety.org) is a not-for-profit industry association with the goal of fostering community and encouraging open communication among those who make their living within the CAD industry including AEC, mechanical, manufacturing, and GIS. The CAD Society is dedicated to creating an informative community and improving the tools its members employ in order to get their jobs done. This is achieved by providing an open forum of communication, which helps to illuminate the practices of industry vendors. It has been a leader in creating interoperability guidelines that encourage software vendors to develop applications that can openly share data.

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