Computer Science Turns 25: A Child Prodigy is Growing Up

For three intense yet sparkling days last April, the Computer Science Option celebrated its 25th anniversary. The early innovators, including option co-founders Carver Mead (BS '56, MS '57, PhD '60, Moore Professor of Engineering and Applied Science, Emeritus) and Ivan Sutherland (MS '60, formerly Jones Professor of Computer Science, now Vice President of Sun Microsystems), were joined by alumni from three decades, former and current faculty, staff, and administration, friends and spouses and children for a variety of events. A jam-packed alumni gathering on Sunday evening at the Caltech Alumni House—at times rollicking, at times poignant—preceded the more formal events on Monday and Tuesday, April 9 and 10.

Presentations by Caltech alumni, former and current faculty, and distinguished colleagues were offered over a span of two days, and were quite diverse—an historical self-portrait of the option was created by some; we also saw the latest short film from Pixar; heard about the state-of-the-art from

Lunch in the Beckman Institute Courtyard.

Graduate student Min Chen at a poster session.

From left to right: Ben Rosen (BS '54), Phil Neches (BS '73, MS '77, PhD '83), Carver Mead (BS '56, MS '57, PhD '60), Bill Gross (BS '80), Lounette Dyer (MS '87, PhD '91), and Bill Davidow. Other than Mead, all the panelists are Caltech Trustees.

From left to right: Option co-founder Ivan Sutherland (MS '60), former Chair of Engineering and Applied Science Bob Cannon, President of Pixar Animation Studios Ed Catmull, and former faculty member, now Assistant Director of Research at Microsoft, Jim Kajiya.

Caltech ex-pats at Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft, Myricom, and Sun Microsystems; and learned of possible futures from the newest Caltech faculty. Presentations brilliantly encapsulated the field from vacuum tubes to VLSI to computer graphics, to massively parallel computing and networks, all the way to DNA, quantum computing and substrates beyond silicon. (A full description of the talks is available in a recent of *Engineering & Science*, Volume LXIV, Number 1, 2001.)

Interwoven among the technical talks were social get-togethers, poster sessions, and lab tours, a panel discussion on "Entrepreneurship and Computer Science," moderated by Caltech Trustee and Board Chairman Ben Rosen (BS '54), as well as a banquet, with the inimitable Carver Mead providing the keynote address.

Jean Chandy, Carver Mead, Barbara Smith, and Alain Martin with Martin Rem.

We hope you were there; if not, check out the website for more details and a photo gallery of highlights at
http://www.eas.caltech.edu/cs25/