alumni

Alums Belytschko and Liimatainen Recognized for Outstanding Achievement

Two former MMAE students were recognized with awards at the October 3 meeting of the MMAE External Advisory Board for outstanding achievement in the field of mechanical engineering.

Ted Belytschko is Walter P. Murphy Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Northwestern University and the editor of the International Journal for Numerical Methods in Engineering. Belytschko earned his bachelor of science (65) and doctoral degrees (68) from IIT.

Belytschko's research interests are focused on finite element methods for nonlinear mechanics problems, such as localization, shell buckling and processes with severe deformations. Specific topics of interest include development of new elements and time integrators, adaptive processes, algorithms for new computer architectures such as parallel processors, and probabilistic methods. In addition, Professor Belytschko is interested in applications such as crashworthiness and nuclear reactor safety problems.

In 2001, Belytschko was awarded the Timoshenko Medal in recognition of distinguished contributions to the field of applied mechanics by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).

Bruce C. Liimatainen, Chairman and CEO of Chicago's A. Finkl & Sons Co., has been instrumental in helping Finkl - the world's leading supplier of forging die steels, plastic mold steels, die casting tool steels, and custom open-die forgings - successfully transition the more than century-old company from an old-line forge shop to a modern, quality-based specialty steel operation.

Starting at Finkl as a project engineer in 1977, Liimatainen was promoted to company president in 1988 at the age of 32. A registered professional engineer, Liimatainen is an IIT graduate and holds the distinction of being the youngest member ever of the American Iron and Steel Institute. He is also a member of the Executive Committee of the IIT Board of Trustees.

IIT's Manufacturing Technology and Management program named Liimatainen "Man of the Year" in May 2003.

Belytschko is pictured with his former Northwestern University student, MMAE Associate Professor Michael Gosz, and Professor Jamal Yagoobi.

Professor Hassan Nagib recalls award winner Bruce Liimatainen as a student in his class.

Jacob Lopata

Lopata Works on RASCAL Project

The Space Launch Corporation (SLC), formed in 1999, designs and develops innovative products for the space transportation industry. Jacob Lopata, the company's co-founder, director, and chief executive officer, earned his bachelor of science degree in aerospace engineering from IIT in 1996 as well as a master of science degree in aeronautics and astronautics from MIT. SLC is the prime contractor for the Rapid Access Small Cargo Affordable Launch (RASCAL) program, and is leading the development of a supersonic, exo-atmospheric launch system in partnership with the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

Preston Carter, DARPA's program manager, spoke about the selection of SLC for this project in the September 22, 2003 issue of Aviation Week. Carter said that SLC's proposal "gave me the best performance for the least amount of risk."

The aircraft that will be the result of this project is hoped to be ready for flight-testing in 2006, with the first launch in early 2007.

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