A real-time reunion

Professor Krithi Ramamritham, his wife Ranjani, and their children Roopa and Rajiv got together this May with current students and past graduates from his Database Systems Laboratory, Real-Time Systems Laboratory, and Real-Time Databases Laboratory. The reunion, celebrating Ramamritham’s 20 years at UMass and his election as an ACM Fellow, was organized by graduate student Cris Pedregal Martin. Fourteen of the 18 Ph.D. students who Ramamritham advised attended the event, along with families of many of the alumni. They gathered at Professor Ramamritham’s favorite restaurant, Amherst Chinese, for lunch, and presented Ramamritham with a commemorative plaque and an engraved Handspring Visor.

In addition to sightseeing around Amherst, they met at UMass for a tour of the new CS building, demonstrations, tea, and friendly conversation. Many also gathered for dinner in the evening. In a more formal part of the event, Panos K. Chrysanthis (Ph.D. ’91) and Wei Zhao (Ph.D. ’86) presented research talks.

“It was wonderful to be together with many of my former students and their families, some of whom I hadn’t seen in years. My family was also thrilled to be with old friends again,” says Ramamritham. “We were touched by the fact that most of them had come to town just for this event.” Ramamritham also remarked that the day brought back memories of long and intense hours spent with these remarkable people, slogging away on papers, and burning the midnight oil.

Ramamritham’s current and former students who attended the reunion include:

- K. Arvind (Ph.D. ’91), Founding and Consulting Engineer, Tenor Networks, Acton, MA
- B. R. Badrinath (Ph.D. ’89), Professor, Department of Computer Science, Rutgers University, NJ
- Panos Chrysanthis (Ph.D. ’91), Professor, Department of Computer Science, University of Pittsburgh, PA
- Oscar Gonzalez (Ph.D. ’00), Member Technical Staff, Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, NJ
- Mohan Kamath (Ph.D. ’97), Engineering Manager, Noosh Inc., CA
- Huan Li (current graduate student)
- Cris Pedregal Martin (current graduate student), Professor, University of New Mexico (January ’02)
- Chia Shen (Ph.D. ’92), Senior Research Scientist and Associate Director, Mitsubishi Electric Research Labs, Cambridge, MA
- Lory Molesky (Ph.D. ’96), Senior Researcher, Oracle Corp., Nashua, NH
- H Shrikumar (current graduate student)
- Rajendran (Raju) Sivasankaran, Founder and CTO, Knumi, Inc., Cambridge, MA
- Fuxing (Fred) Wang (Ph.D. ’93), Founder and COO, Primeon, Inc., Stoneham, MA
- Ming Xiong (Ph.D. ’00), Member Technical Staff, Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, NJ
- Wei Zhao (Ph.D. ’86), Professor, Department of Computer Science and Associate Vice President for Research, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX
- “Even though it was a short period of time (in most cases!) that we spent working closely, a sense of extended family had developed over the years and this special event reinforced it beyond measure,” says Professor Ramamritham. “We are all looking forward to the next reunion already.”
Suthers receives NSF CAREER Award

University of Hawaii Assistant Professor Daniel Suthers (Ph.D. ’93) of the Information Computer Science (ICS) Department received the National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER award for his proposal “Collaborative Representations: Supporting Online Knowledge-Building Discourse.”

Suthers is interested in improving the quality of software available for online learning, both at K-13 and university levels. “I am focusing on providing better support for knowledge-building discourse, the interactions between learners and their mentors by which they arrive at an understanding of a topic of study,” says Suthers. While a student at UMass, Suthers’ advisors were Professor Edwina Rissland and Research Associate Professor Beverly Woolf.

The Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program is a Foundation-wide activity that offers the National Science Foundation’s most prestigious awards for new faculty members. The CAREER program recognizes and supports the early career-development activities of those teacher-scholars who are most likely to become the academic leaders of the 21st century. Awards range from $200,000 to $500,000 and are in duration from four to five years.

Alumni

Panos Chrysanthis (Ph.D. ’91) has been appointed an editor of The VLDB Journal (The International Journal on Very Large Data Bases) for a six year term.

Alumni Connections needs updates!

Calling all alumni: Let us know where you are! We’ll publish a list of where you are living and working these days so you can keep in touch with each other. Send email to alumni@cs.umass.edu or complete the form on the back of this issue. Thanks!

Since spring ’99, John Greene (BS ’93), has been at BEA Systems WebLogic division in San Francisco, CA. Recently, he changed positions within BEA to Backline Interface Engineering Manager. At the new position, he is the interface for worldwide backline support into both engineering and product management. In addition, he will be writing a monthly column for the new Sys-Con publication WebLogic Developer’s Journal.

In addition to her position as Senior Research Scientist, Chia Shen (Ph.D. ’92) has taken on the added responsibility as Associate Director of Mitsubishi Electric Research Labs (MERL-CRL).
W here have they gone?

The Department is proud to have graduated fourteen students with Ph.D.s over the past year.

• Lisa Ballesteros: dissertation topic “Resolving Ambiguity for Cross-language Retrieval: A Dictionary Approach” (Bruce Croft, Advisor); Clare Booth Luce Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Mt. Holyoke College.

• Jefferson Coelho: “Multifingered Grasping: Grasp Reflexes and Control Context” (Rod Grupen, Advisor); Software Design Engineer at Agilent Technologies.

• Madirakshi Das: “Some Studies in the Use of Color for Image Indexing and Retrieval in Specialized Databases” (Ed Riseman, Advisor); Member of Technical Staff at Lucent Technologies-Bell Labs.

• Manfred Huber: “A Hybrid Architecture for Adaptive Robot Control” (Rod Grupen, Advisor); Assistant Professor at University of Texas.

• Oscar J. Gonzalez Gomez: “Building Distributed Real-Time Systems with Commercial-off-the-Shelf Components” (Krithi Ramamritham, Advisor); Member of Technical Staff at Lucent Technologies-Bell Labs.

• Subhabrata Sen: “Network and End-host Support for Heterogeneous Services in the Internet” (Jim Kurose and Don Towsley, Advisors); Assistant Professor at Columbia University.

• James (Tim) Oates: “Grounding Knowledge in Sensors: Unsupervised Learning for Language and Planning” (Paul Cohen, Advisor); Assistant Professor, Computer Science/Electrical Engineering, University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

• Jitendra D. Padhye: “Model-Based Approach to Top-Friendly Congestion Control” (Jim Kurose and Don Towsley, Advisors); Research Scientist at AT&T Center for Internet Research at ICSI.

• Justus H. Piater: “Visual Feature Learning” (Rod Grupen, Advisor); Research Scientist at INRIA.

• Richard Silverman, the book covers internals and applications for Merrill Lynch Direct (www.mldirect.ml.com). He can be reached at dbarrett@blazemonger.com.

H ave you ever wanted to say that there is a chair named after you in the UMass Computer Science Building? Well, now is your chance. While it won’t be an endowed Chair of the Department (though that too is an option with your generous donation), it could be a real chair that gets used every day by faculty, staff, and students. Or maybe you’d like to say that you were responsible for the dining pleasures of our students who use the refrigerator and microwave for meals and midnight snacks.

The Department is in the midst of room renovations to build a departmental lounge for everyone to use. We are well on the way to having the funds for the construction of the lounge, but we still need to furnish the room and provide necessities like a refrigerator and microwave. With your contributions, we can build a gathering place for all to enjoy. When you visit the Department, you can see first hand where your contributions have gone and how they benefit everyone, especially our students. We have provided an envelope for your contribution to go directly to the Department, ensuring that the funds go towards the Campaign for Computer Science. You can specify “lounge fund” on the envelope if you want your contributions to go directly to the lounge renovations.

The Department is a great place to be right now. Your support, in whatever form you choose, continues to make it an even better place. Thank you!

Barrett’s bestseller

Daniel J. Barrett (Ph.D. ’98) published his third computer book, SSH, the Secure Shell: The Definitive Guide with O’Reilly & Associates. Co-authored with Richard Silverman, the book covers internals and applications of SSH, the popular network security protocol. “The book entered the Top 100 Bestsellers list at amazon.com upon publication, duking it out with John Grisham and Harry Potter,” says Barrett. He and his family live in Boston, where he is a software project manager for Merrill Lynch, creating applications for Merrill Lynch Direct (www.mldirect.ml.com). He can be reached at dbarrett@blazemonger.com.

To learn about upcoming events, click “Department Calendar” at www.cs.umass.edu
Updates

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☐ $1,000 (specify a name for a Department Work Area: ________________________)

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Alum Matters

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I hope you are enjoying this issue of Alum Matters. To assure that you always receive it in a timely manner, please take a few minutes to update your contact information with the University's Alumni Association. That is how we meet all our addressing needs – U.S. mail and e-mail. Please visit www.umassalumni.com and follow the prompts.

If you prefer, you can complete the update form below and return it to us.

It's FREE to become a member of the Computer Science Alumni Association! Take a few minutes to update us on your whereabouts. Complete this form and mail it to the address below, or send this information electronically to alumni@cs.umass.edu

YOUR INFORMATION

Name ______________________________

Degree received: ☐ BS ☐ MS ☐ Ph.D. Year received degree:______

Home address _______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

Phone ___________________________ Fax ___________________________

E-mail address_____________________________________________________

WORK INFORMATION

Employer ____________________________________________________________

Title _______________________________________________________________

Work Address _______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

Phone ___________________________ Fax ___________________________

E-mail _____________________________________________________________

URL ______________________________________________________________

Vita/Comments: What have you been working on since you left U Mass?

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

May we share this information with other alumni and publish it in the newsletter?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form