

LARRY SNYDER

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It is my honor to write this brief biography of one of the great computer scientists!

When I think of Larry, the words brilliant, well-rounded, personable, prolific, positive attitude, longevity, giving, creative, and hard working come to mind. Larry's contributions are many and diverse: from his legacy of talented students, to his research gems, to his ever-lasting impact on one of the best computing programs (University of Washington) in the world, to his efforts to increase the number of women in the field of computing, to his international leadership, to his mentoring of many bright young people--making them better computer scientists, and more importantly, better people, and to his helping to shape the direction of computing itself. What is truly amazing is that Larry has maintained a wonderful balance, being a family man and enjoying life to its fullest--illustrating his true genius.



Larry's contributions are widespread, diverse, and significant. I would like to mention a group of Larry's co-authors to illustrate this point. It is impossible to list them all so apologies to the dozens whom I have omitted: Jean-Loup Baer, Francine Berman, Mani Chandy, Janice Cuny, Tony DeRose, Peter Denning, David Dobkin, Carl Ebeling, David Johnson, Anita Jones, Ken Kennedy, Tom Leighton, Richard Lipton, Raymond Miller, David Notkin, Mike Paterson, Alan Perlis, Nicholas Pippenger, Arnold Rosenberg, Larry Ruzzo, Peter Shor, Larry Stockmeyer, and Yechezkel Zalcstein. This select and well-known group of computer scientists work in many different fields, and Larry has co-authored research with all of them.

Larry has served as a professor, visiting professor, or fellow at many prestigious institutions, including the following: University of Washington, ETH Zurich, University of Auckland, Kyoto University, Sydney University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, Purdue University, Yale University, IBM Watson, and Carnegie-Mellon University. All were better off for his being there.

The list of Larry's Masters and PhD students contains many highly talented individuals who themselves have made significant contributions to the field of computing. All of them will tell you what a great impact Larry has had and continues to have on their education, professional career, and lives. His PhD students are as follows: Kye Hedlund, Ching-Chih Hsiao, Catherine May, Philip Nelson, Chyan Yang, Akhilesh Tyagi, Thomas Holman, Robert Cypher, Mary Bailey, Samuel Ho, Smaragda Konstantinidou, David Socha, Calvin Lin, Kevin Bolding, Ton Ngo, Melanie Fulgham, Sung-Eun Choi, Wilbert Weathersby, E Christopher Lewis, Bradford Chamberlain, and Steven Deitz. Larry has been a valuable committee member for many other PhD students, including this author.

Few computer scientists have ever demonstrated such diverse talent as Larry. He has worked in so many different areas and made significant contributions to them. They include algorithms, hardware, networking, software, parallel computing, theory, programming languages, routing, and so on. The list is almost endless. Often Larry has used his creativity to open up new research areas, and he has an uncanny knack of asking important questions and then applying his genius to solve them. His ability to adapt through five decades of technological change and remain at the cutting edge of computing research is remarkable. Since Larry was there at the time of punch cards, he possesses a perspective that few others will ever achieve.

Larry is the co-founder of the *ACM Symposium on Parallelism in Algorithms and Architecture (SPAA)* conference. In 2007 this conference will be held for the 19th consecutive year. Many of the most important papers in the field of parallel computing are published in this conference. The conference is known throughout the world for its high standards. Another of Larry's gifts is his unusually clever ability at naming and analogy. Names such the BlueChip Project, the CHIP (Configurable Highly Parallel Computer), the Pringle computer (which was not quite a CHIP machine), SPAA (often held in a relaxing environment), fluency in computing, and so on. This talent combined with Larry's ability to work in theoretical computer science, with hardware, with software, at a detailed level, and at a big picture level, make him stand out among the greats in our field.

Larry's most-influential book is his work with Addison Wesley titled *Fluency with Information Technology*; this book has helped to educate many introductory students in developing the thought processes required of a computer scientist and information technology specialist. The third edition will be on the shelves in early 2008. The book is beautifully written, and contains some wonderful "Larryisms". From publishing FOCS and STOC papers to writing for non-majors; Larry can cover the spectrum as well as anybody. Larry also wrote *An Analysis of Parameter Evaluation Mechanisms for Recursive Procedures*, *Academic Careers in Experimental Computer Scientists and Engineers*, *A Programmer's Guide to ZPL* (MIT Press), *Being Fluent With Information Technology* (National Academy Press), and is finishing up *Principles of Parallel Programming* (Addison Wesley) with former PhD student Calvin Lin.

How do we measure a person's contributions in their career? The quality of their work is certainly a factor, and Larry gets an A+ --- always producing top-quality research. The volume of their work; Larry's grade is A+ from research papers to book chapters to

invited talks to books to grants --- Larry's work is well rounded. The impact on other key contributors in the field; without question Larry gets an A+. The ability to build and contribute to a great program, and leave a legacy there; at the University of Washington, again Larry gets an A+. The knack for opening up new research areas and bringing about a change in the way of thinking within a discipline; Larry receives an A+. The leadership ability to inspire multiple generations of students; Larry gets an A+. The list goes on and on, and all the grades are A+. But, a man such as Larry never rests on his laurels, and I suspect that he will continue to push the envelope in whatever he does for the remainder of his career and life.

I know that I speak for all those who Larry has touched. Thank you! You are a great man, a brilliant computer scientist, and a wonderful friend! Best of luck in all you do!