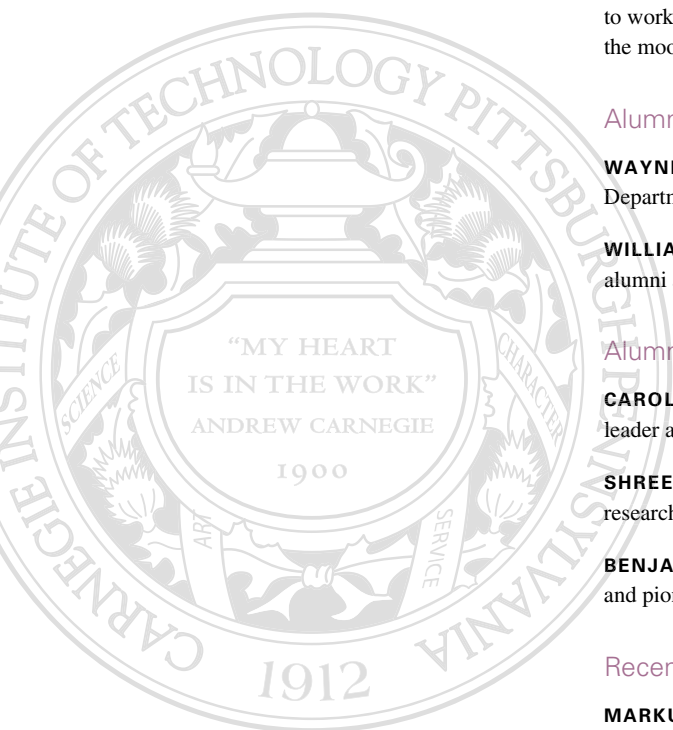


THE 2009 ALUMNI AWARD HONOREES



The Carnegie Mellon Alumni Association honored the following College of Engineering alumni at the 2009 Alumni Award Ceremony on October 30, during Homecoming Weekend.

Alumni Distinguished Achievement

WILLIAM "RED" L. WHITTAKER (M.S., Ph.D. CEE, '75, '79) world-renowned robotics pioneer and founder of Field Robotics, for his vision and leadership in developing unmanned robots to work in dangerous sites, rugged terrains, on-road and off-road, and, in the near future on the moon.

Alumni Distinguished Service

WAYNE S. BALTA (B.S. CEE, '82) for his exceptional service to Carnegie Mellon and the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

WILLIAM THOMAS WOOD, II (B.S. MSE, '74) for his dedication to Carnegie Mellon students, alumni and the Buggy/Sweepstakes tradition.

Alumni Achievement

CAROL A. DUDLEY-WILLIAMS (B.S. ChemE, '80) engineer and change agent, as a corporate leader and outstanding role model for women in engineering.

SHREE K. NAYAR (Ph.D. ECE, '91) pioneering researcher and professor, for his outstanding research and teaching in the field of computer vision and robotics.

BENJAMIN A. PONTANO (B.S. ECE, '65) technology innovator, as an entrepreneurial leader and pioneer in developing satellite communications for the world.

Recent Alumni

MARKUS KLAUSNER (Ph.D. CEE, '98) engineer and corporate leader responsible for developing a new generation of antilock braking and vehicle dynamics control systems.

RAM K. KRISHNAMURTHY (Ph.D. ECE, '98) expert in high-performance digital circuit design, for his vital contributions to new technologies in the semiconductor industry.

OYEKAN RECEIVES 2009 PERCY L. JULIAN AWARD

Dr. Soni Oyekan, the reforming and isomerization technologist for Marathon Oil, received the 2009 Percy L. Julian Award from the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE).

This award is the most prestigious honor presented annually by NOBCChE. It recognizes and honors a recipient's scientific contributions and achievements, dedication to research, commitment to the educational development of others and passion for the chemistry profession.

Oyekan was honored for his contributions in oil refining and chemical engineering. He has 10 patents and numerous publications on petroleum refining and catalysis.

Russell Crockett Jr. (B.S. ChemE, '87) is a senior executive with more than 20 years of experience in the chemical industry. It's a good thing he's well seasoned because he says the last year and a half was "the most difficult of my career in terms of fundamental issues that the business world has faced."

Crockett is the senior vice president of commercial for Texas Petrochemicals (TPC), a leading chemical producer in Houston. He heads the commercial group that's in charge of sales, supply, raw materials and profitability. When he joined TPC in September 2008, two back-to-back hurricanes struck Houston, shutting down company operations. "Coming into a company with that going on was chaotic. Then to compound things, the global financial crises occurred. That was a disaster for not only us, but for the global petrochemical industry," he says. TPC pulled through, "but I got baptism by fire." Those days were difficult yet Crockett took them in stride. His previous positions and even his years at Carnegie Mellon taught him a thing or two about fortitude.

As a student at CIT, he found the engineering program challenging. When he felt overwhelmed, he found support at Carnegie Mellon Action Project (CMAP). CMAP helped recruit African American students and provided them with academic and supportive services. (In 2005, CMAP transitioned into Carnegie Mellon Advising Resource Center [CMARC], broadening its advising efforts and audience without losing sight of the university's commitment to diversity.) "CMAP was like a home, and people there looked out for me," says Crockett. He never forgot those who helped him. In 2008, he initiated the CMAP Legacy Diversity Scholarship Fund to honor Dr. Norman Johnson, Dr. Marion Oliver and others who strengthened diversity at the university.

After CMU, DuPont offered Crockett a position in an engineering rotation program, and the young chemical engineer worked as a process and project engineer in an automotive paint factory in Flint, Michigan. Crockett told his employer that he wanted to rotate into sales, and he was told "you have to demonstrate your technical ability." So he did.

Fresh out of school, "DuPont didn't want to give me projects too vital to the organization. I got smaller jobs," says Crockett, who was determined to make the most of the situation. "At the plant, we had a waste stream that was a mixture of pigments and resins. We paid a company a half a million dollars a year to incinerate it." He saw an opportunity: hydrocarbons could be separated from the waste and put into a boiler to make steam. "Instead of buying natural gas, we cleaned up our waste stream, and sent it to the boilers. We saved half a million in incineration costs and a million dollars in fuel costs."

After that experience, Crockett recruited college graduates for DuPont. Oddly enough, this job changed his perception of Carnegie Mellon. Traveling to other universities, he discovered how their engineering programs differed from CIT's. "In reflection, I appreciate going through the tough experience I did at CIT. When I say I graduated from Carnegie Mellon, people take a step back and say 'Wow! That's a great school.'"

While recruiting was fun, Crockett was determined to get into sales. He earned an M.B.A. from the University of Michigan, and in 1990 he landed a sales position with DuPont. His territory was New York City. "I was a rookie, and I was around senior salespeople. It was fantastic." He learned a great deal from those senior sellers, claiming "it prepared him for the work he does now."

After DuPont, Crockett worked for Lyondell Chemical Company for 12 years and rose to the position of Vice President of Chemical Sales. Then in 2008, he joined Texas Petrochemical, where he now exercises his professional experience and formal education. The sum of these experiences is what gave him the ability to navigate TPC through turbulent economic times.

Crockett says that when he is in a difficult position, he's found that confidence, curiosity and a competitive spirit bring out the best in him. As the keynote speaker at a CMARC retreat titled "Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders," he told students how Carnegie Mellon helped him develop these traits. He says that by working through trying situations, you build confidence and stamina. Curiosity will allow you to figure out where to focus your attention so you can get the next increment of improvement. As for the competitive spirit, with Crockett, competition is not necessarily waged against others – it's more about assessing personal strengths and challenging yourself to achieve more. "When I was a student, my motivation was the fear of failure. Now my motivation comes from being goal oriented. I write down a goal, and I am not satisfied until I reach it."

RUSS CROCKETT

*Confidence, Curiosity
and a Competitive Spirit*

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