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Pixar draws academy kudos

Acad lauds tech crew

By [DAVID S. COHEN](#)

It was another big night for [Pixar](#) and the computer graphics community as the Academy of Motion Picture [See winners](#)

Arts & Sciences feted its Scientific & Technical Award winners.

A half-dozen Pixar scientists, including [prexy](#) Ed Catmull, received kudos at the banquet Saturday night at the BevHilton. Graphics pioneer Gary Demos was the night's only recipient of an Oscar statuette, as he collected the Gordon E. Sawyer Award.

Among 30 who received Technical Achievement Award certificates, Catmull, Tony DeRose and Jos Stam were honored for developing "subdivision surfaces" software that's widely used for rendering irregularly shaped smooth surfaces -- such as human limbs -- in CG animation.

Catmull said it was "an idea that happened some 30 years ago," before Pixar itself existed.

Of the 13 honorees receiving Scientific & Engineering Award plaques, David Baraff, Michael Kass and Andrew Witkin received kudos for their work at Pixar on the mathematics used for realistic rendering of cloth with computer animation.

The ceremony came just three days after Pixar animation maven [John Lasseter](#) received the Melies lifetime achievement award from the Visual Effects Society.

Microsoft's John Platt, who received a certificate (with Demetri Terzopolous) for his own work in simulating realistic cloth, thanked host Rachel McAdams "because my new Kevin Bacon number is now three."

Demos, who won his first Scientific & Engineering Award plaque 21 years



Thesp Rachel McAdams, seated center, hosted AMPAS' Scientific & Technical Awards Saturday night at the Beverly Hilton.



Catmull

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ago and has added another plaque and a certificate since, was hailed for working on issues "so far ahead of the industry they find no immediate commercial use."

His previous honors have come for his contribution to developing film scanning systems and computer imaging techniques.

In his acceptance speech, he remarked, "I like science challenges, the harder the better," before raising the statuette over his head in exultation.

Sound man Don Hall, a 40-year industry vet, received the John A. Bonner medal of commendation. He used his acceptance speech to reminisce about the late Bonner and Sawyer, and to rue that so few, even in the Academy, remember Jean Hersholt and Irving Thalberg.

"I want to ask everyone in the scientific and technical community to remember Gordon Sawyer," said Hall.

Much of the evening was devoted to honoring developers of various remote camera heads and systems, including Skycam inventor Garrett Brown and Cascade crane inventor Anatoly Kokush, who both received plaques.

Kokush said, "Twenty years ago in Ukraine, my first wish was that people recognize my invention, and my second wish was that it be recognized as far as Hollywood. Both wishes have come true tonight."

Certificate recipient [Matt Davis](#), one of three honored for developing the Spydercam suspended camera system, quipped, "Not so bad for a guy who lives in a trailer."

Host McAdams handled the technical jargon with aplomb; highlights from the dinner will be seen on ABC's Oscar [kudocast](#) March 5.

Academy Awards for Scientific and Technical achievements for the year 2005 are:

Scientific and Engineering Awards(Academy Plaques)

- To **David Grober** for the concept and mechanical design and Scott Lewallen for the electronic and software design of the Perfect Horizon camera stabilization head.
- To **Anatoliy Kokush, Yuriy Popovsky and Oleksiy Zolotarov** for the concept and development of the Russian Arm gyro-stabilized camera crane and the Flight Head.
- To **Anatoliy Kokush** for the concept and development of the Cascade series of motion picture cranes.
- To **Garrett Brown** for the original concept of the Skycam flying camera system - the first use of 3D volumetric cable technology for motion picture cinematography.
- To **David Baraff, Michael Kass and Andrew Witkin** for their pioneering work in physically-based computer-generated techniques used to simulate realistic cloth in motion pictures.
- To **Laurie Frost, Peter Hannan and Richard Loncraine** for the development of the remote camera head known as the Hot-Head.

Technical Achievement Awards(Academy Certificates)

- To **Gary Thielges** for the design and development of the remotely-operated, lightweight camera head known as the Sparrow Head.
- To **Frank Fletcher** and **Dave Sherwin** for the introduction and continuing development of the Power Pod modular camera head system.
- To **Alvah Miller, Michael Sorensen** and **J. Walt Adamczyk** for the design and development of the Aerohead motion control camera head and the J-Viz Pre-Visualization system.
- To **Scott Leva** for the design and development of the Precision Stunt Airbag for motion picture stunt falls.
- To **Lev Yevstratov, George Peters** and **Vasiliy Orlov** for the development of the Ultimate Arm Camera Crane System for specialized vehicle photography.
- To **James Rodnunsky, Alex MacDonald** and **Mark Chapman** for the development of the Cablecam 3-D volumetric suspended cable camera technologies.
- To **Tim Drnec, Ben Britten Smith** and **Matt Davis** for the development of the Spydercam 3-D volumetric suspended cable camera technologies.
- To **John Platt** and **Demetri Terzopoulos** for their pioneering work in physically-based computer-generated techniques used to simulate realistic cloth in motion pictures.
- To **Ed Catmull**, for the original concept, and Tony DeRose and Jos Stam for their scientific and practical implementation of subdivision surfaces as a modeling technique in motion picture production.
- To **Harold Rattray, Terry Claborn, Steve Garlick, Bill Hogue** and **Tim Reynolds** for the design, engineering and implementation of the Technicolor Real Time Answer Print System.
- To **Udo Schauss** and **Hildegard Ebbesmeier** for the optical design and Nicole Wemken and Michael Anderer for the mechanical design of the Cinelux Premiere Cinema Projection Lenses.

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