

IT Managers Connection

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Chats with "the" Internationally Renowned Pioneer in Computing

We Canadians have exceedingly rare national treasures that are the foundation of an entire worldwide industry, educational stream, and profession. Their contributions are so profound and their impact so diverse and in so many areas that the lasting value can not be comprehended. As befits this CIM blog, this time it's in the computing field.

I am having the real privilege of talking with computing pioneer, Calvin Gottlieb. As professor emeritus at the University of Toronto (UT), we will get the special opportunity shared by his current students. I asked Calvin if he would share his insights and experiences with us and he agreed! Look for them here in the coming weeks.

Professor Gottlieb's list of "firsts" fills volumes and they are so extensive that we can only discuss a few of them here.

Now in his 6th decade of thought leadership, Calvin continues to inspire, teach, and be a catalyst for innovation. His work in computing began in 1946, immediately after he returned to the University of Toronto from wartime service (which is a story in itself). He quickly laid the foundation for computing as a science creating the first credit undergraduate and graduate university programs, the first computational center, and the first applications of computers for business and industry. Imagine in the 1940s', there were no established file systems, data structures, databases, computing methodologies, algorithms and processes. Nor was there any understanding of the economic, social, security, and privacy impact of computing. Calvin was instrumental in pioneering these and more, authoring or editing many of the first papers and writing leading books on a host of topics. His textbook, "High-Speed Data Processing," co-authored with Hume, introduced computer terminology such as "loop", and "in-line". Calvin's work with the United Nations spawned subsequent initiatives for international development just as his work in Canada, laid the base for privacy legislation.

His team was the first assembled to design and construct digital computers in the 1940s' in Canada and amongst the leaders worldwide and this innovation continued over his career. The University of Toronto, Computation Center, which he co-founded, acquired the first electronic computer in Canada [coded named FERUT], and the second in the world after the US Census Bureau's UNIVAC. FERUT simulations allowed Toronto to be the world's first city with a computer controlled traffic system and was used in the design of the Avro Arrow. The list of firsts is extensive for the Computational Center and represents the history of computing in Canada and worldwide. As noted in the CIPA Hall of Fame citation: "He has been involved in the cutting edge of technology - from the first purchase of an electronic computer in Canada (second anywhere) to the 1984 acquisition of a Cray XMP supercomputer."

Calvin was a founding member of the Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS) in 1958, and served as Canada's representative at the founding meeting of the International Federation of Information Processing Societies (IFIP) in 1959 which was established in 1960 under the auspices of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). Calvin served as CIPS President in 1960-61. Calvin continues to contribute to the industry, education, profession and CIPS as a [Founding CIPS Fellow](#).

Calvin is a former Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM), and a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of Encyclopedia Britannica and of the Annals of the History of Computing. He continues to serve with distinction as Co-Chair of the ACM Awards Committee.

Professor Gottlieb is a "Fellow" of the: Royal Society of Canada, the British Computer Society (BCS), the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), and the Canadian Information Processing Society (FCIPS). Fellows are recognized for their outstanding achievements and contributions to computer science, information technology, society, education or industry and to the mission of their respective groups.

In 1974, Calvin was recognized with the IFIP, Silver Core Award for his outstanding international contributions to IFIP. In 1994, IFIP's most prestigious service award, the Isaac L. Auerbach Award, was presented for the first time at the 13th IFIP World Computer Congress to Prof. Gottlieb. This unique award is in recognition of a long, distinguished, and active service in the field of information technology both in Canada as well as internationally, recognized by public or peer endorsement.

In 1987, Calvin was recognized with a CIPS Honorary Membership, which is the highest award available to CIPS members and awarded to those who have made an outstanding contribution to CIPS and to information processing in Canada. Moreover, there is a CIPS Award named in Calvin's honour, the C.C. Gottlieb Award.

In 1995, Calvin was made a Member of the Order of Canada. The Order of Canada is Canada's highest civilian honour recognizing the lifetime contributions of those that made a major difference to the country.

In 2002, Calvin received the prestigious ACM President Award—one of only 7 who have received this rare international distinction. Moreover, Calvin is inducted to the Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS) Hall of Fame for his

Privacy" - Chat with Kelly Gottlieb, Professor Emeritus

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distinction. Moreover, Calvin is an inductee to the Canadian Information Productivity Awards (CIPA) Hall of Fame for his lasting contribution to technology innovation through the development, management and championing of IT. Who is another inductee? You have may heard of him: Alexander Graham Bell.

Professor Gottlieb received honorary DMath and DEng degrees from the University of Waterloo and the Technical University of Nova Scotia respectively. He is currently Professor Emeritus in Computer Science and in the Faculty of Information Studies at the University of Toronto.

When we chat, I can feel his passion for computing and its wider implications to society, education, industry, government, and the media. I am looking forward to sharing these conversations with you!

Cheers,
Stephen Ibaraki, FCIPS, I.S.P.

Posted: Friday, September 29, 2006 1:09 PM by [ednitmgr](#)
Filed under: [Stephen Ibaraki](#), [Interviews](#), [Guest Bloggers](#)

Comments

E. I. T. said:

Very much looking forward to insights and experiences of computing pioneer Calvin Gottlieb, whose distinguished career is in a class of its own.

September 29, 2006 4:27 PM

[Stephen Ibaraki, FCIPS, I.S.P., sibaraki@ctis.ca](#) said:

No doubt about it, Kelly founded the science and industry. In our talks, he's willing to tackle the issues too that need to be examined. Moreover, he predicts events years before they happen. We should call it the Kelly thermometer and monitor it. Thank you, Stephen Ibaraki

October 2, 2006 7:19 PM

Sarah said:

I enjoyed seeing the history and Professor Gottlieb's contributions. It will be great seeing more ...

October 5, 2006 1:16 PM

[Stephen Ibaraki, FCIPS, I.S.P., sibaraki@ctis.ca](#) said:

Sarah, I know what you mean. His students get this great opportunity to learn from a legend who started it all and continues to serve the profession and industry worldwide. I'm really enjoying the chats with Kelly and I look forward to bringing them to you here. Best regards, Stephen Ibaraki

October 6, 2006 8:20 PM

[Canadian IT Monitor](#) said:

This is the next interview in the continuing series of Computing Canada's (CC) Blogged Down (BD) which

October 20, 2006 2:27 PM

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