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A Celebration of Accomplishments

It is that time of year when ACM once again celebrates the accomplishments of an impressive array of contributors to our field, profession, and to ACM. The annual ACM Awards Gala

takes place on June 20 in San Francisco and this year, for the first time, the Turing Award recipient will receive \$1,000,000 thanks to the generosity of Google.

Michael Stonebraker has been a fixture in the database constellation for many years and his contributions have resulted in the formation of new companies and new insights into database design and implementation. His work has been widely recognized and it is deeply satisfying to see it honored by ACM in this way. I am going to miss this celebration, owing to some required travel, so I would also like to extend my congratulations and well wishes to all of the honorees at the awards banquet this June.

As many of you may know, ACM's CEO John White announced his intention to retire from ACM last year and this milestone will be passed later in 2015. John has been a guiding star for ACM for decades, having served in many capacities including president from 1990–1992 and as the CEO since January 1999. It is impossible to summarize the far-reaching and constructive impact of John's tenure but our organization and our profession would be poorer without his passionate commitment to excellence, computing, and ACM. I have had the satisfaction of working with him during his long association with ACM and have admired his skill, diplomacy, creative instinct, and management talent. The more I spend time with him, the more I hope a little of that will rub off on me. He

has a self-effacing style that proves an old Washington (D.C.) saying that you can accomplish a great deal if you don't care who gets credit for it. John has gotten *a lot* done under the many hats he has worn while serving ACM. Speaking as a former president and current council member, I can confirm he has built and sustained a well-functioning team at ACM, led by the COO, Pat Ryan. John and Pat have fashioned an enabling environment for volunteers and a solid team of full-time staff without whom ACM would be greatly diminished. I wish John well as he approaches this milestone and thank him for many years of faithful and effective leadership.

I would also like to take a moment to share something I learned during a recent visit to the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) at West Point. I was visiting the computer science and electrical engineering departments for the day and had a chance to meet with senior leadership, faculty members, and students. There

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was a significant fraction of women enrolled in these computer science and electrical engineering departments and I found them particularly energized. Having heard some sad tales of women in other university settings who felt unwelcomed in classrooms filled with males, some of whom lacked any ability to engage in civil discourse, I was surprised and pleased to hear that things seemed to be better at USMA. On enquiry, I learned one reason for this is the head of the department insisted on trying to make sure there were at least three women in each class. It turns out it is far easier and more effective to defend someone else than it is to defend yourself. The latter may be seen as self-serving while the former is often seen as reinforcing and justifiable. While this is by no means a sudden panacea for solving the inclusiveness problem, it struck me as a very effective tactic that might prove useful in other settings. Another instructor told me he had required men and women on the USMA crew (rowing team) to train in mixed teams to reinforce respect for the talents and abilities of both groups. These practical steps reinforced my hopes that we will find our way to serious improvement in the statistics of the participation of women in computer science and electrical engineering.

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