Ira M. Kay succumbs


A specialist in the Simscript language, Kay was active in the field of simulation for many years, most recently as general manager of Southern Simulation Service, Inc., Tampa, Florida. Among the large simulations he designed as a consultant were a computer-controlled automatic warehouse for the Ford Motor Company, an airline terminal operation for Control Data Corporation, an inventory model for Green Giant Company, and a stacker crane/conveyor system for General Electric Company.

Prior to forming SSSI, Kay was an officer in the US Air Force, from which he retired in 1965. While in the service he was a key member of the group which provided the progressive automation of the world's largest logistics system, from manual records through punched-card accounting to the greatest battery of computers in use today.

After organizing the Annual Simulation Symposium in 1968, Kay continued to guide its progress, serving on the Board of Directors until his retirement in 1978. In 1977 he succeeded in ensuring the symposium's future by distributing organizational responsibility throughout the simulation community and gaining formal recognition and support from ACM, SCS, and the IEEE Computer Society. A member of all three organizations, Kay was a frequent contributor to periodicals and professional meetings. He served as guest editor of the April 1977 Computer, which dealt with simulation.

Free subscriptions offered to Testing Techniques

Software Research Associates has announced the availability of free subscriptions to its quarterly newsletter, Testing Techniques. The newsletter is devoted to the technology of software quality assurance and addresses methods that enhance the effectiveness and quality of computer software of all kinds.

Request subscriptions on company letterhead from Software Research Associates, PO Box 2432, San Francisco, CA 94126; (415) 957-1441.

World Computer Graphics Association formed

The World Computer Graphics Association, a federation of national associations, held its first Board of Directors' meeting January 7 in Washington, DC. According to Caby C. Smith, president, WCGA will provide an international forum for computer graphics users, managers, consultants, vendors, and researchers by fostering the creation of national computer graphics associations. Smith, who is an associate chief scientist with the National Park Service, also heads the US National Computer Graphics Association formed in mid-1979.

WCGA has already initiated contacts with interested parties in Australia, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the Scandinavian nations, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, Smith said, and joint conferences are being organized for 1981.

For additional information write or call World Computer Graphics Association, Inc., 2033 M Street NW, Suite 333, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 466-2170.

Errata

The dates for COMPSAC 81, the IEEE Computer Society's Fifth International Computer Software and Applications Conference, have been changed since their listing in the Calendar and Call for Papers sections of the February issue of Computer. The correct dates are tutorials, November 16-17; conference, November 18-20, 1981.
The IEEE Computer Society task group charged with developing a software test documentation standard has set January 1982 as a target date for having a draft standard ready for ballot. According to David Gelperin, chairman, the group is especially anxious to establish liaison with any other organization which develops professional standards and has an interest in test documentation. The task group, which meets every two or three months in various locations around the country, is composed of volunteers, and membership is open to all interested parties.

The group’s objectives are to develop a draft standard definition of a substantial set of generally effective software test documents and to have its proposal adopted as an IEEE standard. The group is attempting to identify as comprehensively and concisely as possible a set of documents as consensus will permit. The stated purpose of the standard is to:

- identify a complete range of software test documents,
- define the purpose, author, and audience of each document, and
- outline and describe the contents of each document.

The standard will be applicable when testing commercial, scientific, or military software which runs on any size computer. Applicability will not be restricted by the software’s size, complexity, or criticality.

Gelperin expects the standard’s development process to proceed through four phases: (1) definition—determination of purpose and scope and definition of terms, (2) design—determination of content and organization at a detailed level (i.e., complete outline), (3) construction—writing the standard, and (4) approval—gathering reactions and making the necessary modifications. Currently, the group is in the design phase, with a few loose-ends remaining from the definition phase in the area of terminology.

In attempting to define the scope of the project, Gelperin noted, there has been a great deal of discussion about the definitions of “software” and “testing.” The group has found that both these terms are used in a narrow and a broad sense. “Lowercase s” software denotes computer programs, while “capital S” software denotes requirements, plans, designs, publications, training, and data in addition to programs. “Lowercase t” testing focuses on executing code, while “capital T” testing encompasses the entire life-cycle and subsumes all verification and validation activities. The group’s current plan, Gelperin said, is to produce a first version which focuses on the testing of programs, control data, and publications. However, the group uses both terms in their broader sense, in an attempt to provide a natural framework for future work.

Using software quality in a broad sense, i.e., to denote the “ilities,” the group presently defines “testing” as any process with a potential to expose deficiencies in the quality of a software item. This definition is not stated in terms of process objectives, but only in terms of process potential. “Prerelease testing,” i.e., testing before turnover to the user community, is distinguished from “postrelease testing,” i.e., the “test of time.”

So far, the task group has identified four types of test documents: test plans, test design specifications, test procedure specifications, and test reports. It plans to provide general specifications for each type of document, along with specifications specific to each stage of the development cycle (e.g., module test plans and system test design specifications).

Anyone interested in membership or additional information should contact David Gelperin, Task Group Chairman, 2425 Zealand Avenue North, Golden Valley, MN 55427; (612) 828-4475.
Prof. Atchison receives ACM education award

William F. Atchison, chairman of the Curriculum Committee on Computer Science—C3S—which produced "Curriculum 68" (CACM, March 1968), is the first recipient of an ACM award for outstanding contributions to computer science education. The award was presented February 26 in St. Louis, Missouri, during the SIGCSE Symposium where Atchison delivered the keynote address, "Computer Science Education—Past, Present, and Future."

Atchison has been instrumental in ACM's curriculum development efforts since 1962, when he formed and chaired the subcommittee which preceded C3S's emergence as an independent committee in 1964. He has also served as chairman of the ACM Education Committee and its successor, the Education Board.

For a number of years, Atchison chaired the AFIPS Education Committee, continuing as its representative to the IFIP Education Committee until July 1980. At present, he chairs the IFIP Working Group on Advanced Curriculum Projects in Information Processing, is a member of a UNESCO-sponsored committee working on informatics curriculum for developing nations, and is on the Program Committee for the 1981 World Conference on Computer Education.

Currently a professor of computer science at the University of Maryland, Atchison was director of the Computer Science Center or acting chairman of the Department of Computer Science when the university's BS, MS, and PhD programs in computer science were initiated.

AFIPS Education Committee applies for WCCE travel grants

The AFIPS Education Committee has submitted a proposal to the NSF International Travel Grants Program on behalf of US participants and attendees to the Third World Conference on Computer Education to be held in Lausanne, Switzerland, July 27-31, 1981.

Those interested in applying should write to the AFIPS Education Committee, Attn. Jane Smith, AFIPS, 1815 North Lynn Street, Suite 800, Arlington, VA 22209. If a grant is awarded, application blanks for individual travel grants will be sent out in early March.