

Georges Giralt

By Raja Chatila, Bernard Roth, and Oussama Khatib

A pioneer and visionary, Georges Giralt, passed away in February 2013 at the age of 82. Giralt was one of the founders of the robotics and automation discipline in France and Europe and one of its worldwide historical pillars. He contributed to its establishment as a field on its own.

Before he was seduced by robotics, he had initiated many actions and pioneered new orientations, including works on the first semiconductors. This included cofounding the Laboratory of Analysis and Architecture of Systems (LAAS) in 1967, a French Center of Scientific Research (CNRS) research unit associated with the University of Toulouse as a major laboratory engaged in electronics and control and in space applications. In 1972, he was awarded the Silver Medal by the CNRS for that work.

His sabbatical year in 1976 at the University of California at

Berkeley—a place he cherished—was a turning point in his career. Upon his return to France, he founded the Robotics and Artificial Intelligence



A quiet Sunday with friends in Toulouse, France, 31 May 2009.

Group at LAAS and started the autonomous mobile robot project Hilaire in 1977, which was aimed at building an intelligent autonomous mobile robot. This was the first project of this kind in Europe, and one of the very few in the world at the time. In 1980, he launched the French national program Advanced Robotics and Automation in cooperation with major French research institutions and with the automotive and electronics industries. Later, he led the French program for robotic Mars exploration in 1989.

It was under his leadership that seminal work in robotics was achieved, as early as 1983–1986, in navigation, simultaneous localization and mapping, motion planning and control, robot architectures, flexible assembly systems, and later in multirobot cooperation and personal robotics. Giralt also started the new field of dependable robots and organized the first Interna-

tional Advanced Robotics Program (IARP)—IEEE Robotics and Automation Society Workshop on Dependable Robotics that was held during the International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA) in Seoul, South Korea, in May 2001.

Giralt's vision was to foster the notion of robotics as a distinct scientific field and to create a broad community of robotics. In the 1980s, together with Michael Brady, Richard (Lou) Paul, Hideo Hanafusa, Hirochika Inoue, Olivier Faugeras, and others, he initiated a number of contributions for establishing the early foundation of our field: the first journal entirely devoted to robotics, the *International Journal of Robotics Research*, the *International Symposium of Robotics Research*, and the *International Foundation of Robotics Research* for which he was the chair in 1989. Simultaneously, he had been a strong contributor, since its inception, to the development of our IEEE Robotics and Automation Society.

Giralt was keen on making our discipline an international endeavor. He was the representative of France and the program secretary of the IARP, which was originated by the G7 at the Versailles Summit in 1982 (currently with 16 participating countries). He was instrumental in making our Society's flagship conference, ICRA, a truly international conference, as he organized it outside of the United States for the first time in Nice, France, in May 1992.

Giralt was a recipient of the Joseph Engelberger Award for his contribution

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to Robotics Technology Development (1997) and the RAS Pioneer Award (2003). He received the French Légion d'Honneur for his contribution to international research cooperation in 1988. The impact of Georges Giralt on robotics in general and on the European robotics community in particular

has led the European Robotics Network (EURON) to give his name to its Annual Best Thesis Award.

In addition to all his achievements and exceptional talents, those who were privileged to work with him will always remember him as someone who gave much of himself to our field and to the

relationships and cooperation between people and nations. Giralt's kindness, openness, extraordinary enthusiasm, and humanity left a deep indelible impression on his many colleagues and friends throughout the world.



Tc Spotlight (continued from page 23)

References

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IEEE ICRA 2014

May 31 ~ June 5, 2014, Hong Kong, China

2014 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation

<http://www.icra2014.com>



The 2014 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA) will be held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center, Hong Kong, China, from May 31 to June 5, 2014. Hong Kong, situated on China's south coast and enclosed by the Pearl River Delta and South China Sea, is renowned for its expansive skyline and deep natural harbor. Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, and serves as the one of the busiest gateway between the east and west. The conference theme is "Robotics and Automation: Technologies Enabling New Economic Growth" reflecting the growing spectrum and recent developments in robotics and automation around the world.

Call for Papers

Papers are solicited in all related areas in robotics and automation. Prospective authors should submit PDF versions of their paper. Six pages in standard ICRA format are allowed for each paper, including figures. A maximum of two additional pages is permitted with extra cost. We also invited authors to submit a video clip to complement the submission. Detailed instructions for submission are available on the conference website. All accepted papers will be presented in oral sessions.

Call for Videos

Videos of 1.5 to 3 minutes illustrating new and exciting results are sought for dedicated video sessions. Videos should be accompanied by an extended abstract and should be submitted via the PaperPlaza submission site for the conference.

Call for Tutorials & Workshops

Proposals for half-day or full-day tutorials and workshops will be reviewed according to instructions on the conference website. Prospective organizers should emphasize new technologies in robotics, automation and intelligent systems, and address the conference theme and relevance to ICRA. Proposals must be submitted directly to one of the co-chairs of workshop/tutorials.

Call for Organized Sessions

Organized/special sessions are solicited on emerging areas and innovative applications of new technologies. Papers in organized/special sessions must be submitted through the regular submission process, while the proposals must be submitted to the co-chairs.

Important Dates:

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| AUG 15, 2013 | Proposals for organized/ special sessions |
| SEPT 15, 2013 | Submission of full length papers and videos |
| SEPT 15, 2013 | Proposals for tutorials/ workshops |
| JAN 15, 2014 | Notification of papers and videos acceptance |
| FEB 15, 2014 | Final submission |

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