

In Memoriam

Richard A. (Dick) Volz



(1937–2013)

This journal and the Robotics and Automation community lost a greatly admired leader and friend on June 19, 2013, when Richard A. (Dick) Volz passed away after a courageous battle with cancer.

Dick was a Professor at Texas A&M University and served as President of the IEEE Robotics and Automation Society in 2006/2007, among many other important roles and honors. Dick and his students made fundamental contributions to research in robotics, controls, and teleoperation. Dick will also be remembered by his remarkable leadership. He was the driving force behind many important innovations such as the RAS Conference Editorial Board and the Awards Review Committee. Dick had the utmost integrity and worked tirelessly to improve the RA Society. When he asked anyone to volunteer time for the RAS, they could not refuse knowing how dedicated he was. He traveled around the world to attend IEEE meetings and would answer every e-mail within minutes, even if it had been sent during the middle of the night.

As RAS Vice-President of Publications Dick Volz played a fundamental role in the conception of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON AUTOMATION SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING. Dick convened and worked closely with an international Steering Committee that stepped back to consider the past and future trajectory of research in Robotics and Automation, concluding that a new publication devoted to Automation was essential to expand our community and scope. He will be remembered as a co-Founder of this publication.

Dick was a wise and dedicated mentor, working behind the scenes to advise and advocate for the careers of many junior and senior researchers. Dick was also a talented photographer and family man, proud to be joined by his charming wife Mary at conferences. Although he was modest and self-effacing, he knew how to enjoy life and had a subtle sense of humor. I recall sitting on his back porch in Texas, smoking a cigar with him in the midst of his cancer treatments, and asking him if it were okay to be smoking while undergoing chemotherapy. His answer was typical: “Well, at least I know these cigars won’t kill me.”

Prof. Nancy Amato created a memorial website for Dick Volz where friends and colleagues can post memories, links, and photos: <https://parasol.tamu.edu/volzfest/remembrances/>

Dick was a friend, advisor, and inspiration in every way. I regret he will not be able to read this issue of T-ASE which introduces Special Sections from two major international conferences, the IEEE Conference on Automation Science and Engineering and the Workshop on Algorithmic Foundations of Robotics. I’m grateful to all of the Guest Editors who invited pathbreaking papers from leading authors and facilitated the review process. This Issue exemplifies the expanding scope of Automation that Dick Volz envisioned over a decade ago.

KEN GOLDBERG, *Editor-in-Chief*
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