



George W. Webb III '88, '91

President
Rice Engineering Alumni

Rice Engineering Alumni names Outstanding Alumni of 2011

R. Norris Keeler, Chem.E. '51 – Outstanding Engineering Alumnus

Aaron Hertzman, Comp.Sci. '96 – Outstanding Young Engineering Alumnus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 25, 2011 (Houston, Texas) – The Rice Engineering Alumni (REA) board of directors has announced its 2011 awards for Outstanding Engineering Alumnus (OEA) and Outstanding Young Engineering Alumnus (OYEA).

Honored as the OEA is R. Norris Keeler '51, who earned a B.S. in chemical engineering at Rice and and master's and doctoral degrees at the University of Colorado and the University of California-Berkeley, respectively. Named the OYEA is Aaron Hertzmann '96, who graduated from Rice with a B.A. in computer science and another in art and art history.

Keeler and Hertzmann will receive their awards at the annual REA honors presentation in Duncan Hall on Friday, November 4, as part of the Rice Homecoming weekend. In addition to receiving their awards, each honoree will give a short talk on their work and career. All faculty, staff, students and alumni are invited to attend the awards presentation and reception following.

Keeler enlisted in the U.S. Navy and completed active duty as missile guidance and electronics officer. In 1963, he joined the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory as a member of the Equation of State and Property of Materials Group, and became its division leader. In 1975 he became head of LLNL's physics department, a post he held until 1975.

From 1975 to 1977, Keeler served as one of six principal advisors to the assistant secretary of the Navy for research and development. He attained the rank of captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve and served five tours as a unit commanding officer. Since 1979, Keeler has worked in the private sector as a consultant and as the principal scientific advisor of Kaman Aerospace Corporation.

His research has focused on foreign science and technology assessments, nonacoustic antisubmarine warfare, physical oceanography, submarine laser communications, mine detection, cryogenic engineering, high pressure physics, electro-optics, high pressure equation of state, lidar systems and ocean surveillance. He holds more than 20 patents in the area of airborne lidar and laser communications.

Keeler has received a multitude of professional awards, include the Gold Medals of three organizations: the American Society of Naval Engineers (1992), the Armed Forces Communications and Electronic Association (1993), and the International Eurasian Academy of Sciences (1994).

After graduating from Rice, Hertzmann, the OYEA, earned a master's degree in 1998 and Ph.D. in 2001, both in computer science, from New York University. His doctoral thesis earned departmental honors as the outstanding dissertation in computer science. Hertzmann served as acting assistant professor in the computer science department at the University of Washington in 2001- 2002. He joined the computer science department at the University of Toronto in 2003, and has been an associate professor there since 2007.

In 2009-2010, Hertzmann was a visiting research scientist at Pixar Animation Studios in Emeryville, California. His work focuses on the response of digital characters to changing environments, with potential applications in animated films and video games.

In 2009, Hertzmann won the Young Computer Science Researcher Award from the Canadian Association of Computer Science. The following year he was named a fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. Also in 2010 he received the Steacie Prize for Natural Sciences, awarded annually to a young scientist or engineer who makes exceptional contributions to research in Canada. The prize, one of Canada's highest technical honors, is administered by the trustees of the E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fund, a private foundation for the advancement of Canadian science and engineering.

Each year the REA recognizes outstanding engineering alumni in two categories. Presented annually since 1974, the Outstanding Engineering Alumnus award recognizes alumni for careers of exceptional achievement and community service. The Outstanding Young Engineering Alumnus award was first presented in 1996 and recognizes the achievements of engineers under the age of 40.