

August 2025

# SRI Alumni Association



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## Message from Don Nielson



*Don Nielson*

In each issue of this Newsletter, I try to highlight what you can look forward to and, where I'm able, provide a little context that also invites you in. Upfront in this issue, Caren Rickhoff has compiled a set of current projects that confirm your expectation of SRI continuing to do interesting and relevant research.

As conventional integrated circuits get more dense, they get hotter and performance degrades. Since at least the 1970s, light has been used to try to replace electrical currents, helping to keep temperature down and to improve speed. This is never more needed than in the dense, three-dimensional, layered chips now emerging. See how SRI, in its Boulder and Princeton locations, is attacking this problem under DARPA's sponsorship.

As compared to a decade or so ago, if you've ever tried to fill a prescription for an opioid, you've seen the measures in place to help restrict overdosing. But overdoses still occur, and those involving the most potent pills demand a more effective antidote. SRI is researching how.

Finally, there is research toward what now seems inevitable: a more natural interaction with your friendly robot. Large language models (LLMs) seem irresistible in filling that role, even when we are still learning their use and limitations. One wonders how long it will take for an AI intermediary to check that "I'm not a robot!" box. See how our robot interaction technology is progressing at SRI.

Aligned with this subject is a note in the History Corner from Adam Cheyer, one of SRI's most prolific researchers. Here he recalls how he and a few others created a new world of collaborative software agents at SRI a couple of decades ago. From the outset, their concepts drew a distinction between passive agents, ones that did not change their access site, as in information retrieval, and agents that on your behalf performed explicit actions that did. Siri had this latter capability while still at SRI, but lost it along the

<b>News from SRI</b>	<b>2</b>
– Goodbye Electrons, Hello Photons	2
– SRI Begins Clinical Trial of High-Dose Naloxone	2
– Robot Teams that Chat with Humans	3
<b>History Corner: Agentic Computing</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Alumni News</b>	<b>6</b>
– Annual Alumni Reunion	6
– Spring Fling 2025 photos	7
– Incorporation Plans	8
– Where are They Now? Craig Heinselman	8
– Congressman Gerry Connolly Dies	9
<b>In Memoriam</b>	<b>11</b>
– Edward Acton	11
– Richard Adamo	11
– Michael Boldrick	12
– Gerald Connolly	12
– Earl Craighill	13
– Oscar Firschein	14
– Edward Jones	14
– Thomas Logothetti	15
– David Walker	15
– Melvin Wright	16
<b>New Membership in the SRI Alumni Association</b>	<b>17</b>

way. This distinction doesn't change with the burgeoning appearance of LLM-based agents. You'll relish the brief recollection and insight from one of the world's notables in this area.

Next, you'll find accounts of the successful Spring Fling, read about alum Craig Heinselman's latest achievement, and then learn of the passing of fellow alums, one surprising in his accomplishments. To him and all the others, we must bid farewell.

Finally, read how your new leadership is moving toward changing the basis for this Association; namely, toward a nonprofit incorporated association. Nominations for officers is now open and online voting will happen in time to have results announced at the Reunion. As a bonus we hope to soon be able to accept online/credit card dues payments. We'll keep you apprised.

Now, dig in!



## Goodbye Electrons, Hello Photons

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) recently awarded SRI \$7,500,000 as part of their Heterogeneous Adaptively Produced Photonic Interfaces (HAPPI) program, which aims to advance the capability of circuits that transmit information using light (photons) rather than electricity (electrons).

Current integrated circuits used in computing rely on semiconductor-based chips and metal connectors to transmit information using electricity and share a fundamental dynamic: When they become dense and connection-rich, they become more powerful, but they also generate more heat. At some point, the heat generated begins to degrade the performance of the circuit.

For two decades, scientists have sought to overcome this limitation by advancing photonic integrated circuits (PICs). Theoretically, PICs can attain unprecedented routing density, given that light produces much less heat than electricity. In practice, scientists need to more precisely control light within an integrated circuit before PICs can achieve their full potential and advance information processing.

SRI is a leader in next-generation photonics research by virtue of its Boulder and Princeton facilities. “SRI’s Boulder facility has incredible expertise in designing and testing PICs,” says SRI senior research scientist David Hill. “At our Princeton facility, we specialize in doing all sorts of unique fabrication—things that fall outside of the standard offerings of a conventional foundry service.”

### The challenge of advanced photonic circuits

“In electronics, the industry has spent many decades developing this whole metallization back-end,” Hill observes. “It’s stacks and stacks of different layers of metal that help to connect different areas on a chip that couldn’t be connected in a purely two-dimensional way. You keep getting more and more density in terms of connections, memory, and storage. That’s really what enables the modern CMOS [complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor] chip, and that level of complexity does not yet exist for photonic integrated circuits.”

Achieving a complex three-dimensional photonic circuit requires solving three fundamental challenges: getting light to turn out of the two-dimensional plane; getting light to

propagate through the entire thickness of a wafer so that it can move between chips; and ensuring low-loss transfer of light between chips, especially when there is misalignment between those chips.

DARPA’s HAPPI program goal is to improve multiple specific performance metrics of PICs related to low-loss interconnects and high photonic routing density. SRI will conduct the project in two phases: (1) creating a proof of concept for a PIC with four photonic layers and (2) further boosting the density of the circuit configuration. Critical enablers of SRI’s approach will include new approaches to etching vertical waveguides, designing turning mirrors, and employing polymer-based interconnects.

### The future of PICs

Advanced, reliable PICs could have profound effects on national defense capabilities, given the dependence of modern military technologies on powerful, compact, energy-efficient integrated circuits. PICs may also have commercial applications in cases where today’s electronic circuits are constrained by physical limits.

Making the innovations of the HAPPI program scalable is not just about raw capabilities, Hill adds. The team is also thinking about the eventual large-scale rollout of PICs: “These tools need to be compatible with foundry processes in the future. That’s an underlying design constraint.”

“I don’t want to say that photonic computing will replace all electronic computing,” Hill concludes. “But there are particular cases where PICs hold major advantages over traditional electronics.”

**Sources:** SRI Press Room. July 10, 2025. [sri.com/press/story/building-the-photonic-circuits-of-the-future](https://sri.com/press/story/building-the-photonic-circuits-of-the-future)  
SAM.gov contract award notice. Accessed July 16, 2025. [sam.gov/opp/5f508a6da55945a18bb9e2c70687abd1/view](https://sam.gov/opp/5f508a6da55945a18bb9e2c70687abd1/view)



## SRI Begins Clinical Trial of High-Dose Naloxone

As noted in our [April 2022 newsletter](#)<sup>1</sup>, an SRI team led by Gita Shankar, senior director of the Pharmaceutical Sciences Lab, developed a highly concentrated naloxone formulation that provides a rapid and sustained reversal of opioid overdose, particularly in cases involving ultrapotent synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, nitazenes, and carfentanil. The SRI formulation delivers 10 times more naloxone per

1. [srialumni.org/newsletters/2022/AlumNews-Apr-2022.pdf](https://srialumni.org/newsletters/2022/AlumNews-Apr-2022.pdf)

milliliter than current marketed products and is optimized for systemic availability and shelf stability, making it more suitable for emergency use in the field. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently authorized SRI to initiate a Phase 1 clinical trial of this naloxone formulation under an Investigational New Drug (IND) application. The clinical trial is evaluating SRI's high-dose naloxone formulation for intravenous and intramuscular use.

## Desperate need

Deaths involving synthetic opioids rose by more than 700% between 2015 and 2022, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. While overdose deaths have begun to decline, fentanyl and other synthetic opioids continue to devastate communities around the country.

The current naloxone formulations are all very low dose and are not as effective for reversing effects of the kinds of synthetic opioids that are available in the market today. The SRI naloxone medication can help reduce the number of opioid fatalities with a single high-dose injection that first responders can use in life-threatening situations. The dose of the SRI formulation can be modified by first responders trained to adjust the level based on individual need, unlike preset doses in currently used autoinjectors.

When someone overdoses on opioids, the person's breathing can slow or even stop, leading to oxygen deprivation, coma, and death. Naloxone, also known by the brand name Narcan, can reverse these effects by blocking opioid receptors in the brain and displacing any opioids that are binding to those receptors.

"The problem is that Narcan lasts only about 90 minutes," Shankar says. "Then it drops off and the opioids can re-bind to those receptors." This can result in renarcotization, a recurrence of overdose symptoms such as respiratory depression, and the patient can stop breathing again. "Giving naloxone in higher doses can reduce a deep overdose more effectively, but it's not as simple as injecting a larger volume of the existing medication," Shankar adds.

"Flooding the system with naloxone ensures that more opioid receptors are blocked effectively and that more molecules from deeply binding opioids like fentanyl are displaced," says Shankar. "This significantly reduces the risk of recurrence —although continuous monitoring is necessary."

## Next steps

The researchers have leveraged safety studies from other naloxone products to support the clinical development of this formulation. With the clinical trial now under way, the

team is actively advancing manufacturing steps to support a rapid path toward a New Drug Application (NDA) following successful trial completion.

"This is a more effective naloxone formulation with improved systemic availability and product stability on the shelf," Shankar says. "In the hands of emergency responders, it has the potential to address the synthetic opioid overdose crisis head-on and save lives."

**Source:** SRI Press Room. June 11, 2025. [sri.com/press/story/sri-receives-fda-clearance-to-initiate-a-clinical-trial-of-high-dose-naloxone](https://sri.com/press/story/sri-receives-fda-clearance-to-initiate-a-clinical-trial-of-high-dose-naloxone)



## Robot Teams that Chat with Humans

Development of next-generation robots that can converse with humans and each other will be based on large language models (LLMs) responsible for generative artificial intelligence (AI) applications.

"Before LLMs, robots could move and perform tasks, but they couldn't explain what they saw and how they did things," says Han-Pang Chiu, technical director in SRI's Vision and Robotics Laboratory. "We're moving from command-based robotics to conversational collaboration. That's a fundamental shift—and it's going to change how we work with machines."

Chiu's recent project, called "Shared Understanding for Wide-Area Human-Robot Collaboration" (SUWAC), aims to take full advantage of emergent LLM capabilities to advance communications between humans and robots. The premise: to equip a multitasking team of robots with an LLM-based framework that allows humans to communicate with the robots in natural spoken or typed language and locate any object more efficiently and effectively.

"With LLMs, robots can describe what they see, what they're doing, and, most importantly, why they are doing it—and, in turn, researchers can understand and communicate with the robots," says Chiu. "It builds trust and improves collaboration."

The implications of projects such as SUWAC are far-reaching and could lead to search-and-rescue robot teams that explore scenes of natural disasters, household robots whose owners can speak commands like "wash the dishes," or even factories of robots that chat as they work.

## Large Language Models

A large language model (LLM) is a type of artificial intelligence (AI) program that can recognize and generate text, among other tasks. LLMs are trained on huge sets of data — hence the name “large.” LLMs are built on machine learning; specifically, a type of neural network called a transformer model.

In simpler terms, an LLM is a computer program that has been fed enough examples to be able to recognize and interpret human language or other types of complex data. Many LLMs are trained on data that has been gathered from the Internet — thousands or millions of gigabytes’ worth of text. But the quality of the samples impacts how well LLMs will learn natural language, so an LLM’s programmers may use a more curated data set.

LLMs use a type of machine learning called deep learning to understand how characters, words, and sentences function together. Deep learning involves the probabilistic analysis of unstructured data, which eventually enables the deep learning model to recognize distinctions between pieces of content without human intervention.

LLMs are then further trained via tuning: They are fine-tuned or prompt-tuned to the particular task the programmer wants them to do, such as interpreting questions and generating responses, or translating text from one language to another.

**Source:** Cloudflare website. Accessed July 16, 2025. [cloudflare.com/learning/ai/what-is-large-language-model](https://cloudflare.com/learning/ai/what-is-large-language-model)

## Robodog and Roborover

In one of Chiu’s demos, a canine-like quadruped robot (Robodog) and a wheeled robot (Roborover) were placed in a room that looked like a small high school theater. Four steps descended from a dais to the main floor, where Robodog and Roborover awaited. Chiu gave a prompt in colloquial English, “I don’t remember where I left my backpack and laptop. Can you two find them?” The two robots began exchanging information about the room and divvying up the work. Robodog knew that Roborover would find the stairs challenging and offered to search the dais. Roborover offered to search the rest of the room. Soon, both the backpack and the laptop were found.

## A new approach to navigating unfamiliar environments

To help robot teams better navigate unfamiliar environments, SUWAC takes a new approach to robot-to-robot communication. The primary challenge is one of data: What data should the robots exchange between each other, and how can they minimize the amount of data exchange required to do their job effectively? In many areas where robot teams can be most useful, network constraints are inevitable.

The key breakthrough, Chiu explains, is a “three-dimensional (3D) scene graph,” a more efficient way of capturing and categorizing information than the data-rich “point clouds” often used in vision-based robotics. Chiu calls the 3D scene graph the “missing link”: It allows robots to categorize and label visual data in a way that is easy to exchange with other robots and explain to human operators. These scene graphs are readily interpretable by LLMs, enabling the robots to understand what is nearby and what actions might be appropriate. Chiu says that this combination of LLMs and scene graphs also helps create a “shared understanding” between humans and machines.

“Instead of relying on humans to describe every detail, we let the robot perceive, interpret, and explain its world in language,” Chiu says. “That saves time and allows for much more natural collaboration. It’s unlike anything that has gone before.”

Using scene graphs, Chiu’s SUWAC-equipped robots can distinguish a kitchen from a bedroom by the objects they see and can use sophisticated reasoning to search the most likely locations of the objects being sought. In short, the robots are situationally aware and are able to use the kind of common-sense reasoning that helps humans quickly interpret new environments. It’s a type of reasoning that was beyond the reach of machines until very recently.

“Common sense is what separates humans from most AI,” Chiu explains. “We aim to bring that ability into robotic planning.”

## A fundamental advance in robotics

SUWAC, explains Chiu, is the first use of an LLM for wide-area robotic search. According to a paper related to the SUWAC project, SRI has achieved a 95% success rate in object search within unfamiliar environments, and SUWAC is also much more data- and energy-efficient than previous wide-area search models.

Chiu expects the use of LLMs in wide-area searches to accelerate quickly as he and other researchers continue down this path. Recently, SRI licensed the SUWAC technology to robotics startup Avsr AI with the aim of commercializing SUWAC’s novel capabilities.

“Talking to a static machine is different from talking to a mobile robot,” Chiu emphasizes. “We’re demonstrating that generative AI, already adept at answering chat and voice prompts on computer systems, has a massive role to play in robotics and 3D navigation.”

**Source:** SRI Press Room. May 5, 2025. [sri.com/press/story/robot-teams-that-talk-to-humans](https://sri.com/press/story/robot-teams-that-talk-to-humans)



# A Look Forward (and Backwards) at Agentic Computing

By Adam Cheyer

*Adam is currently VP of AI Experience at Airbnb. At SRI, he was a co-creator of the Open Agent Architecture (1990s) and a co-founder and VP Engineering of SRI's spinout, Siri.*

In recent months, “agentic computing” has become a central focus in discussions about the future of generative AI. From open research platforms to startup roadmaps and enterprise deployments, the vision of intelligent systems that don’t just inform but *act*—systems that can coordinate, execute, and adapt—has captured the imagination of researchers and technologists alike. But while the latest wave of interest in agentic systems may be new to some, SRI International has a deep and pioneering history in exactly this space.

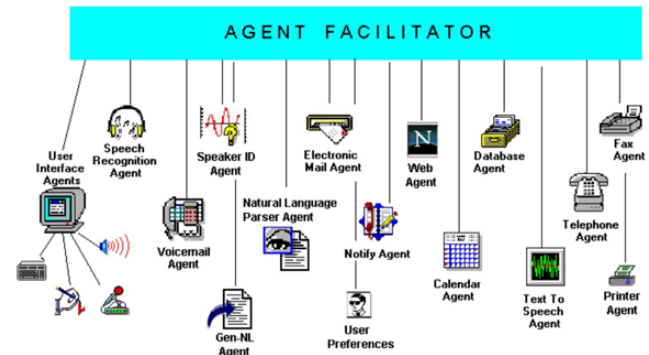
## What Is “Agentic Computing”?

Agentic computing refers to the design of AI systems that go beyond passive information retrieval or static responses. These systems can *initiate and carry out tasks* in the world, interact with APIs or physical environments, and coordinate with other agents—human or artificial—to achieve goals. They exhibit what Michael Wooldridge<sup>1</sup> once described as “proactivity” and “social ability”—hallmarks of intelligent agents that not only *know* but *do*, and, increasingly, *collaborate*.

Modern conversations about agentic AI often focus on single-agent tools enhanced by large language models (LLMs), but the core ideas—modularity, orchestration, and multimodal interaction—have rich precedents in the work done at SRI.

## Revisiting the Open Agent Architecture

In the 1990s, SRI’s Artificial Intelligence Center developed the **Open Agent Architecture (OAA)**, a powerful framework for distributed agent-based systems. At its core was the *Facilitator*, an agent responsible for maintaining a dynamic registry of the capabilities of other agents in the network—essentially a matchmaking and orchestration hub. Agents could advertise services, discover others,



and collaborate to fulfill user goals, whether answering a question, booking a service, or assembling data across domains.

The OAA architecture was one of the earliest practical demonstrations of modular intelligence. It allowed agents to be developed independently yet work cooperatively in real time—a vision remarkably similar to today’s calls for “tool-using LLMs” or “multi-agent frameworks.” Its influence extended into numerous applications, including spoken dialog systems, robotic platforms, and knowledge-based services.

## Siri: The Original “Do Engine”

Another milestone in SRI’s contributions to agentic AI came in the form of **Siri**, originally spun out from SRI in 2007. Unlike the chat-based assistants we often think of today, the early Siri was explicitly conceived as a “do engine.” It could take a user’s natural language command—typed or spoken—and act on it, drawing from a rich set of application programming interfaces (APIs) and partner services.

Need to book movie tickets? Siri could check real-time listings via MovieTickets.com or Fandango, then purchase them directly, all using a voice request. Need a ride? Siri accessed TaxiMagic’s APIs to dispatch a cab (a forerunner of today’s ride-hailing). Restaurant reservations, concert tickets, flight status—all were within Siri’s reach, thanks to partnerships with over 50 online services and a secure transaction layer for executing real-world tasks.

Perhaps just as forward-thinking was Siri’s **multimodal interface**. Users could interact through voice or graphical user interface (GUI) and switch between modalities mid-task, and the system would maintain conversational and task continuity. Today’s resurgence of interest in “multimodal agents” is another area where SRI’s past work remains deeply relevant.

1. Professor of Computer Science at Oxford University with a main interest in multi-agent systems, including those with rational action and “self-interest.” Elected fellow of the ACM (Computer Science) and AAAI (Artificial Intelligence) in 2018.

## Lessons for the LLM Era

As today's LLMs become increasingly capable and connected to external tools and APIs, we are seeing a reawakening of ideas long cultivated at SRI. The current challenge isn't just in making systems that *understand*, but ones that *plan*, *delegate*, and *respond* in dynamic environments. The principles of distributed intelligence, cooperation among specialized agents, and multimodal human-AI interaction—embodied in OAA and Siri—remain foundational.

While today's agentic systems may have access to vastly more data and compute power, the core architectural insights from SRI's earlier work offer a roadmap for designing systems that are reliable, transparent, and capable of real-world impact.

As we look forward to the evolving landscape of AI agents, it's worth looking back at how much of this vision was seeded at SRI—and how those seeds are still bearing fruit.

*As an entrepreneur, researcher and developer, Adam Cheyer has a track record of pioneering many important technical innovations. As co-founder of Siri (sold to Apple), he originated the first popular voice assistant, resident on more than 2B devices. As co-founder of Sentient (sold to Cognizant), he helped build one of the first truly large-scale distributed machine learning platforms, running neural networks and genetic algorithms on more than 2M CPUs. As founding member of Change.org, he helped create the first social network for social activism, today with more than 500M members. As co-founder of Viv Labs (sold to Samsung), he helped develop the first Internet-scale voice assistant that could plan and execute complex tasks and transactions based on an ecosystem of partner services.*

*At SRI, Adam was chief architect of the CALO/PAL, a large government-funded AI effort; co-director of the Computer Human Interaction Center (CHIC); and a program director in the Artificial Intelligence Center. Adam has authored 60 publications and 50 patents. He graduated with highest honors from Brandeis University and received the "Outstanding Masters Student" award from UCLA's School of Engineering.*

**Click to RSVP**





## Spring Fling 2025

The 2025 Spring Fling was great fun! Held at the I Building at SRI in Menlo Park, with about 60 people in attendance, it featured delicious food, a fun trivia game, and engaging conversation. A big shout out to our new event committee co-chair, Ann Johnston, for organizing a wonderful Fling, and to Scott Seaton and Patti Price for being dynamic trivia hosts, adding the funny twist of awarding points for both correct and most-funny answers. This may have to become an annual game! Thanks to Jim Colton for the photos of the event ! You can find more at: [srialumni.org/events/img/fling/2025](https://srialumni.org/events/img/fling/2025)



## Incorporation Plans

The SRI Alumni Association has existed informally for many years. Originally, it was a part of SRI. A few years ago SRI requested some separation, which has left us without real status. In order to accept online payments, we need to have status as a legal entity with officers responsible for payments who are protected legally through incorporation.

We are pursuing incorporation as a member-benefit nonprofit (501(c)7). Doing so offers many benefits, including the ability to use services that help nonprofits receive electronic dues payments, track dues status, and manage membership data and correspondence. The costs are not unreasonable in terms of money, likely less than \$1500 for initial federal and state filings and about \$20/year for state filing fees. The costs in time are more significant as we discuss and agree on details, fill out forms, and create the necessary documents. So, please forgive us if some balls are dropped while our team is coming up to speed. Also, please feel free to volunteer to help!

Incorporating will shield individuals from any liabilities of the Association, give us increased credibility, create a formal



and more transparent legal structure, and allow us greater independence.

A 501(c)7 organization has many of the benefits of a 501(c)3, most notably tax exemption from federal income taxes. It is different in that it must benefit its members (as opposed to the public or specific other groups), and in that dues or other donations are not tax deductible. Going forward, we would be required to receive at least 65% of our funding from payments from members (dues, donations).

Drafts of our founding documents (Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and Rules of Order) are available for your review: [srialumni.org/about](http://srialumni.org/about). Please feel free to comment! The state requires we have at least three officers (President, Secretary, and Treasurer) elected by the full membership. We plan to do this annually in time to announce results at the yearly Reunion. Once we are incorporated, we can apply for tax-exempt status with the state and with the Internal Revenue Service.

We believe that, going forward, these changes will make it easier for the general membership and for the Steering Committee, and we ask for your support of our plans: .

- **Founding documents are posted for your comment**
- **Nominations for officers are open now through Sep. 4**
- **Online voting Sep 11-18**
- **New officers announced and begin term at the Reunion.**

Please let us know if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions. Send any questions, comments, and/or nominations to: [steering@srialumni.org](mailto:steering@srialumni.org)

### Nominations Needed!

We are soliciting nominations for the Offices of the SRI Alumni Association **President, Secretary, and Treasurer**. Please send your nominations to:

[steering@srialumni.org](mailto:steering@srialumni.org)

## Where are They Now? Craig Heinselman

Craig Heinselman was recently awarded the Beynon Medal by the European Incoherent Scatter Scientific Association (EISCAT), which he led after leaving SRI to join the University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute as a research professor. Craig received the honor for his work leading a six-nation organization that builds and operates ionospheric research facilities in northern Fenno-Scandinavia.

The Beynon Medal, named after the late Welsh physicist Sir William John Granville Beynon, is awarded by the EISCAT Council. The council includes representatives of China, Finland, Japan, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Beynon award has been given only 10 times in its 22-year history.

The EISCAT Council recognized Craig for his work in advancing EISCAT\_3D, an advanced radar system designed to study Earth's ionosphere, other parts of the upper atmosphere, and the near-Earth space environment. It will be the only facility of its kind dedicated to ionospheric research.

Read the full article here: [gi.alaska.edu/news/uaf-physicist-receives-top-honor-european-science-association](http://gi.alaska.edu/news/uaf-physicist-receives-top-honor-european-science-association)

Craig authored the [December 2021](#) "History Corner" for the Alumni newsletter, and several other staff experiences noted in the [December 2020](#) and [April 2021](#) editions of the newsletter carried many of Craig's photos of the various radar sites in Alaska and Greenland he worked on while he was at SRI.







## Congressman Gerry Connolly Dies

By Don Nielson

With some certainty, most of you reading this never met Gerry Connolly, nor

were you aware that one of your fellow alumni was a U.S. Congressman, and one of some distinction at that. Gerry worked in SRI's Washington, D.C. (WDC), office, located in Arlington, VA, from 1989 to 1997<sup>1</sup>. During that time and afterward, he became involved in local Northern Virginia politics and eventually won a seat in Congress. He died in May while in office and as ranking member of the House Oversight Committee.

Before joining SRI, Gerry had worked a decade or so as a staffer to the Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations. Much of his work there, as you might guess, involved oversight on many international economic issues. That experience, plus his degree from Harvard's Kennedy School, made him a valuable addition to the SRI work force. His SRI entry point could have been in several places in the Business Group, all of which dealt with foreign policy in economics. But at that time SRI's Policy Division, led from the WDC office, made noteworthy contributions to a range of foreign and domestic clients. A couple of its prominent leaders were Matty Mathieson and Cathy Ailes. That division became Gerry's professional home, and his early SRI work involved contributions to commercial projects trying to forecast economic futures, some domestic and some foreign. In just two years he became deputy director of the Policy Division, and by 1992 he not only became its head but took on administrative duties as head of SRI's WDC office, a position he held until leaving SRI in 1997.

1. Lisa Beffa's help in providing Gerry's SRI tenure information is appreciated!

Over the next decade or so, while still working at another firm, Gerry became active in local politics. He was elected for multiple terms to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. This in turn led to chairmanship of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and President of the Virginian Association of Counties. In 2009 he ran for and was elected to represent Virginia's 11th Congressional District, remaining in that office until his passing this year.

Rather than list his Congressional roles and legislative enactments, please go to [Wikipedia](#) for a summary. His accomplishments are substantial. But there is one unusual adjunct to such duties that I think is worth mentioning: Unbeknownst to most of us, NATO has a Parliament Assembly. Its main roles are to shape NATO policies and to connect NATO with the National Parliaments of the member countries. Gerry twice served as its president, the last as recently as 2024, when Sweden and Finland joined NATO. For his efforts on behalf of Ukraine, he also received one of their highest awards "for his long-standing and strong support of the state sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine." Here is a eulogy from the Assembly's current President, Marcos Perestrello of Portugal:<sup>2</sup>

"It is with profound sadness that I learned of the passing of former President Connolly this morning. Gerry was one of the most consequential Presidents this Assembly has ever had, having served as President twice. He was an extraordinary leader and a role model for many of us. He spent his career as a fierce defender of our unique transatlantic Alliance and its foundational democratic values. His leadership elevated the stature of our Assembly and, through the Assembly, elevated the voice of Allied parliaments and citizens. As we pay tribute to his exceptional service, his exemplary integrity, remarkable drive and determination as well as his profound commitment to public service and to the defence of democracy, freedom, justice, the rule of law and human rights will continue to inspire all Assembly members..."

2. [nato-pa.int/news/nato-pa-mourns-loss-former-president-honourable-gerald-c-connolly](https://nato-pa.int/news/nato-pa-mourns-loss-former-president-honourable-gerald-c-connolly)

### Alumni Association Membership Renewals

Thanks to those who have renewed their SRI Alumni Association dues for 2025. If you have not, then please do so as soon as you can. **2026 dues are due by December 31.** Please send your \$25.00 check payable to **SRI Alumni Association** to:

**SRI Alumni Association**  
333 Ravenswood Avenue, AC-108,  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

### If you have an SRIFCU account,

you can email the credit union ([connect@srifcu.org](mailto:connect@srifcu.org)) and request the transfer from your account to the SRI Alumni Association account. If SRIFCU asks for a voice verification, call 650-800-5434 and press Option 2.

Enroll or renew here:

[srialumni.org/join](https://srialumni.org/join)

## Steering Committee

**Archives:** Don Nielson, Scott Seaton

**Events:** Ann Johnston, Chris Padilla

**Finances:** Ann Johnston, JD Smith

**Independence:** Ann Johnston, Sandra Needs-Ramirez, Patti Price (also Ed Davis)

**IT/Web:** Hal Huntley, Patti Schank

**Membership Mailing Lists:** Hal Huntley, Linda Jansen, Donald Shockey

**Newsletter:** Jeanie Graham, Patti Price, Caren Rickhoff

**Secretary:** Patti Schank

**United Kingdom Liaison:** David Gibby

## Wanted: Your Submissions

We welcome articles and shorter items from all Alumni Association members to be considered for publication in the newsletter. Have you done something interesting or traveled to interesting places? Received any awards or honors? Your fellow alumni want to know! Please send items to: [steering@srialumni.org](mailto:steering@srialumni.org)



### The SRI Alumni Association welcomes new members:

Joe Eckerle

Colleen Griggs

Patrick Mendez

Leo Neumeyer

Susan Reynolds Schabinger

Gary Scott

We look forward to your participation in the next Alumni Association and hope to see you at our next group event.

## WE NEED HELP!

If you can volunteer any time, we need help with:

- finding stories for this newsletter
- assisting alums (mailing newsletters to those who need a printed copy, reading it to those who require assistance)
- recruiting new members
- or, just contact us to say what your skills are

You can reach us at: [steering@srialumni.org](mailto:steering@srialumni.org)

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\*APYE = Annual Percentage Yield Earned.



SRI Federal Credit Union



## Edward Acton

Edward McIntosh (Ed) Acton died on January 27, 2025, at the age of 94 at the Saratoga Retirement Community, where he had resided for the past 20 years. Ed was born May 30, 1930, to a prune-farming family

in Morgan Hill, California. Education, music, and a brilliant career in research were Ed's life endeavors. He graduated from Stanford University with a degree in chemistry and earned a Ph.D. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Ed's first job at Merck Pharmaceuticals in New Jersey began a distinguished career in cancer research and development of chemotherapy agents. His career moved him to notable institutions, including MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and the National Institutes of Health in Washington, D.C., as well as SRI International. At SRI in the 1970s, Ed researched chemotherapy drugs, notably adriamycin and its analogs. His long career resulted in numerous publications and patents.

Upon retirement, Ed remained for years at his home in Menlo Park, California, and enjoyed an active social life, choir membership at the First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, and staying in touch with colleagues and family. Throughout his life he retained a fondness for his hometown, Morgan Hill, and frequently visited his cousins there. He visited New York City often for Christmas holidays, concerts, or a week of opera. He also took cruises to Alaska, the Amazon River, and Mexico. Visits with his English cousins took him to classic European destinations, where he enjoyed art, opera, espresso with three sugars, and chocolate desserts in every country from Budapest to London. Ed is missed by friends and family, who remember him as an engaging and principled gentleman.

**Sources:** Obituary published in The Mercury News ([mercurynews.com/obituaries/edward-mcintosh-acton-saratoga-ca/](https://mercurynews.com/obituaries/edward-mcintosh-acton-saratoga-ca/)); Information in A Heritage of Innovation by Don Nielson ([sri.com/publication/a-heritage-of-innovation-sris-first-half-century/](https://sri.com/publication/a-heritage-of-innovation-sris-first-half-century/))



## Richard Adamo

Richard Adamo, a long-time Palo Alto resident who was instrumental in the development of spacecraft launch assurance during the Space Shuttle Era, died at the age of 78 on May 11, 2025, following a decades-long battle with

heart disease.

Richard was born in Manhattan on February 13, 1947, to parents Barbara and Nicolas Adamo. Richard graduated early from Saint Agnes High School with a near-perfect SAT score and an offer from the state of New York to attend any college in the state tuition-free. Richard began at Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, eventually earned his associate's degree in electronics at the RCA Institute, then returned to earn his bachelor's degree at Brooklyn Tech, during which time he was accepted for graduate school at MIT, Stanford, and Cal Tech. He chose Stanford and the Electrical Engineering Master's Program, which also included a foray into psychology courses and the chance to participate in Phillip Zimbardo's famous 1971 prison experiment.

After graduation, Richard joined SRI, where he worked for over 40 years. Richard focused his research primarily on electrostatic charging of aircraft and spacecraft, as well as the effects of lightning and electromagnetic pulses. He held five patents and authored or co-authored numerous technical reports.

Among his more notable contributions at SRI, Richard was instrumental in developing the Online Lightning Monitoring System (OLMS) for the Government. OLMS is designed to continuously detect and characterize the effects of lightning-induced electromagnetic transients at spacecraft launch sites in the United States. The system allows users to assess the electromagnetic threat to sensitive electronic systems aboard spacecraft and to retest systems only if necessary, thus enabling the U.S. Government to proceed with launches confidently after lightning events, avoiding costly delays. Over 25 years after the OLMS system was rolled out at Cape Canaveral and Vandenberg Space Force Bases, it remains the operational standard helping assure safe access to space.

Richard loved opera, theater, and the arts, and was a season ticket holder to Palo Alto Players. He also loved to travel and was a voracious reader. He was armed with a sharp wit and an encyclopedic trove of jokes. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth; his daughters, Sophia and Madeline; and his grandchildren, Lizzy, Wren, and Ariana.

**Sources:** Obituary published in Palo Alto Online ([obituaries.paloaltoonline.com/obituaries/](https://obituaries.paloaltoonline.com/obituaries/)); Sechi, P. and Adamo, R., The development, deployment, and operation of an On-Line Lightning Monitoring System (OLMS) for spacecraft launch support, SAE Technical Paper 2001-01-2901, 2001, [doi.org/10.4271/2001-01-2901](https://doi.org/10.4271/2001-01-2901).





## Michael Boldrick

Michael Riordan (Mike) Boldrick, of Santa Maria, California, died at his home on April 18, 2025, at the age of 86. Mike was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on February 20, 1939, and raised in Owensboro,

Kentucky. He graduated from Brescia University in Owensboro with a B.A. in English, and earned an M.S. in economics from South Dakota State University. He enrolled in the U.S. Air Force Officer Training School, advancing to Missile Operations in the Aerospace Support Group (SAC). He was awarded several merits and ribbons throughout his distinguished 25-year career, including the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 1 OLC, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, Combat Readiness Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon. At the time of his retirement from the USAF, he led the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center's MX Test Team at Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Mike joined SRI in 1987 after retiring from the Air Force, initially supporting strategic systems study efforts under the leadership of Earl Blackwell and Dr. Jim Means. Mike transitioned these projects into the growth of programs and staff at Vandenberg AFB for the Systems Development Division of SRI's Engineering Group. He later became director of the Instrumentation and Simulation (I&S) Program in the Engineering Research Group and managed the highly successful Deployable Force-on-Force Instrumented Range System (DFIRST) program—a critical tool for Army National Guard and U.S. Army training that could instrument ground force soldiers and their equipment so well that training maneuvers could realistically simulate battlefield conditions, as well as augment mission planning and assessment. The project later became known as the eXportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) and led to the spinout of the SRI subsidiary Ravenswood Solutions. In 2010, Mike and his team were awarded the SRI Presidential Achievement award, which recognized staff members whose extraordinary contributions made a positive and lasting impact on the world, SRI's clients, and SRI. After Mike retired, he was inducted into the SRI Alumni Hall of Fame in 2016 for his leadership of the DFIRST, XCTC, and I&S programs.

Mike was a gifted writer and photographer, and his work was published in the Smithsonian, Wall Street Journal, Reason, Sacramento Bee, Trains, and Classic Toy Trains. He collected rare Lionel model trains and classic circus

memorabilia.

Mike is survived by his wife of 63 years, Kathleen Marie (Knott) Boldrick; five daughters (Peggy Bowes, Katie Guerrero, Susanna Gomon, Penelope Whisnant, and Beth McDonald); sister Sallie Mac Fox; 11 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

**Sources:** John Prausa; 2016 Alumni Hall of Fame entry ([srialumni.org/hof/](https://srialumni.org/hof/)); obituary published by Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary ([dudleyhoffmanmortuary.com/obituaries/Michael-R-Boldrick-Col-USAF-Ret?obId=42129748](https://dudleyhoffmanmortuary.com/obituaries/Michael-R-Boldrick-Col-USAF-Ret?obId=42129748))



## Gerald Connolly

Gerald Edward (Gerry) Connolly, a nine-term congressman representing northern Virginia who was the top Democrat on the House Oversight Committee, died May 21, 2025, of esophageal cancer

in Mantua, Virginia, at the age of 75.

Gerry was born on March 30, 1950, in Brighton, Massachusetts, to Edward R. and Mary T. Connolly. As a young man, Gerry attended the Venard (Maryknoll Junior Seminary High School) in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, and Maryknoll College in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, where he received a B.A. in literature in 1971. He worked for a time for Heifer Project International in Little Rock, Arkansas, and then in 1972 he moved to Washington, D.C., to work for the American Freedom from Hunger Foundation, where he rose from education director to executive director, and simultaneously served as executive director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees. Gerry received his Master of Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in 1979. From 1979 to 1989, he worked as a staffer for then-Senator Joe Biden on the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where he developed his deeply honed knowledge of foreign policy before entering the private sector.

Gerry worked in SRI's Washington, D.C. (WDC), office in Arlington, VA, from 1989 to 1997. In his early years at SRI, he worked on commercial projects involving forecasting of domestic and foreign economic futures. He was deputy director of SRI's Policy Division, and later became head of the WDC office. He left SRI in 1997 and worked as director of Community Relations for SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation).

His elected life of service spanned 13 years on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, including 5 years as Chairman, and 16 years in the U.S. House of

Representatives. While serving in Congress, he was elected as the ranking member of the Oversight Government Reform Committee and was twice elected president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Gerry is survived by his wife of 52 years, Catherine Marie “Smitty” Smith; his daughter, Caitlin Rose Connolly; his sister Rosemary and brother Philip; and many beloved cousins, nieces, nephews, and their families.

More details on Gerry’s work and professional accomplishments can be found in [the article by Don Nielson in this issue of the Alumni Newsletter](#).

**Sources:** Tribute by Don Nielson ([see article in this newsletter](#)); Wikipedia article ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerry\\_Connolly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerry_Connolly)); obituary published by the Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home ([fairfaxmemorialfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Gerald-Edward-Connolly?obId=42588636](https://fairfaxmemorialfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Gerald-Edward-Connolly?obId=42588636));



## Earl Craighill

Earl John Craighill died on August 21, 2024, from injuries sustained in a solo automobile accident.

Earl was born in Billings, Montana on 29 May 1940, the second oldest of seven children. His parents were John Earl and Agnes Craighill.

Earl attended nearby Carroll College in Helena, where he obtained a BA degree. Inquisitive from an early age, he studied electrical and electronic engineering at Montana State University, where he graduated with a master’s degree. He finished his formal education with a PhD in Computer and Information Sciences from Michigan State University in 1970.

Earl joined SRI shortly thereafter and spent most of his career working in electronic communications, notably helping bring communications technology into the digital age. In the late 1960s, the growth of computers was centered on computation but soon entered the communications realm. In the very early 1970s, that took the form of email and file transfer. But by about 1974, the need for a fuller complement of dialog soon emerged to include speech. At the time, human speech swamped the available network transmission speeds, and as a result, a lot of effort was placed on compressing speech to enable its use on the emerging digital packet networks. Earl and colleague Tom Magill had been working on compression, and in 1976 they won sponsorship to place this new technology on a packet radio net, one that SRI was developing for DARPA and over which Internet traffic was being tested. The internetworking protocols were

subsequently modified to handle speech, culminating in the present standard called Voice Over Internet Protocol, or VoIP, and laying the groundwork for modern computer speech recognition. The picture shows Earl in the SRI van (now displayed at the Computer History Museum as the “Internet Van.”) using his prototype VoIP equipment.

As that technology progressed into broader use, Earl soon found a new SRI role bringing communications for the deaf into the digital world. The consequence of that work from about 1977 to 1982 was the DEAFNET, which consisted of small, portable modems, combined with new special network servers to enable deaf users to send text messages over normal dial-up telephone lines. Earl was a consistent contributor to that work until its completion. DEAFNET technology was used widely in the deaf community until digital cell phones and texting arose.

Earl’s personal life was devoted to family and a range of personal interests, including sports, classic cars, and model railroading. He also found an away home near Mendocino, where he purchased some land. His first wife was Karilyn, with whom they had two daughters before she died. Later, while working at SRI, he met Nancy Knolle, and they were married in Mendocino in 1991. Earl and Nancy had two children. Earl loved sports and he coached his children to competitive levels. He was also a Giants fan, always taking his mitt to Giants games. While his wife first thought that odd, he once used it to catch a foul ball headed directly at her!

Earl loved tinkering to revive old classic cars, but his most compelling hobby was model trains. He built those in the back yard of his Sunnyvale home and later, when he retired to Mendocino, he and a friend built a large-scale “ride-on” train system. Earl was a founding partner in the Mendocino Coast Model Railroad & Historical Society in Fort Bragg. Mendocino became his home in retirement, where his acreage satisfied his environmental interests and became the gathering spot for his family each year.



**Sources:** Don Nielson; [dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/santa-rosa-ca/earl-craighill-11955919](https://dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/santa-rosa-ca/earl-craighill-11955919); [encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTpQSHFDxRzYm1tChLv0EhwIE8Z3PLDsufxmveA-l0KIPP4Twpvz7XmjZs&s](https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTpQSHFDxRzYm1tChLv0EhwIE8Z3PLDsufxmveA-l0KIPP4Twpvz7XmjZs&s); [computerhistory.org/blog/born-in-a-van-happy-40th-birthday-to-the-internet](https://computerhistory.org/blog/born-in-a-van-happy-40th-birthday-to-the-internet)



## Oscar Firschein

Oscar Firschein died in Palo Alto on March 5, 2025, at the age of 97. Son of a printer in Brooklyn, New York, he pioneered research in the early field of artificial intelligence. As a child, Oscar tinkered with radios and

chemicals. He later earned a B.E.E. from the City College of New York and an M.S. in Applied Mathematics from the University of Pittsburgh. He worked on major construction projects with the Army Corps of Engineers, including a gigantic dam and a hospital, and programmed one of the first modern computers for Republic Aviation. Oscar and his wife, Theda, moved to the Bay Area in the 1960s when he began to work for the Palo Alto Research Laboratory at Lockheed.

Oscar then took a job in the Perception Group at the Artificial Intelligence Center at SRI International. His work influenced the development of key AI technologies, such as the ability of satellites to recognize images from space, autonomous land vehicles, remote piloted aircraft, and NASA space station automation. He participated in Dialog, one of the first library information retrieval systems and search engines, and he published multiple articles and books, including a leading textbook on AI, *Intelligence: the Eye, the Brain and the Computer*.

Oscar also worked for DARPA in Washington, D.C., where, as a program manager, he directed significant research in the field of image understanding. He taught and consulted at Stanford University, the University of California, Berkeley, and San Jose State University.

Oscar's and Theda's art-and-music-filled creekside home near the Stanford University campus was a gathering place for intellectuals, poets, writers, and Silicon Valley's emerging leaders. The house was filled with colorful oil paintings and wood-block prints, circuit board sculptures, Yiddish records, and a one-ton printing press hauled from New York from Oscar's father's former print shop.

Oscar had a great influence on the careers of his graduate students, and many went on to leading professorships and significant careers in industry.

Devoted to studying, the synagogue, Talmud classes, and Great Books, Oscar's intellectual curiosity led him, in his 70s, after a full career in engineering, to earn an M.L.A. in Liberal Arts from Stanford in 2000, and then to edit the program's literary magazine, *Tangents*, for almost a decade thereafter. He wrote two memoirs of his life, completing the second in March 2025. Before Oscar's death, Oscar

and Theda had recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. Theda died on May 18, 2025.

Oscar is survived by his two sons, Ben and Joseph, and three grandchildren. He leaves behind a rich legacy of accomplishments, family, and friends. He had an amazing life that spanned nearly a century. He will be remembered and missed.

**Sources:** Obituaries in The Jewish News of Northern California ([weekly.com/2025/03/21/death-announcements-for-the-week-of-march-21-2025/](https://weekly.com/2025/03/21/death-announcements-for-the-week-of-march-21-2025/)), Palo Alto Online ([obituaries.paloaltoonline.com/obituaries/memorials/oscar-firschein?o=8911](https://obituaries.paloaltoonline.com/obituaries/memorials/oscar-firschein?o=8911)), and The Mountain View Voice ([obituaries.mv-voice.com/obituaries/memorials/theda-firschein?o=9006](https://obituaries.mv-voice.com/obituaries/memorials/theda-firschein?o=9006))



## Edward Jones

Edward McClung Thompson (Ted) Jones of Los Altos, California, died March 5, 2025, at the age of 99. Ted received his MS (1948) and PhD (1950) in electrical engineering from Stanford University. He served in

the Navy before joining SRI, where he researched passive microwave devices.

In 1964, Ted and co-authors George Matthaei and Leo Young published a 4.5 lb (2 kg) book called *Microwave Filters, Impedance-Matching Networks, and Coupling Structures*. Besides new material and reference material, it contained a compilation of work that was carried out at SRI over the period of the previous 6-7 years, from 1956 through 1963. The book not only contains solutions to filter and coupler problems, but also to the “nuts” and “bolts” type problems that are essential to practical circuit realization. Most often referred to as simply “Matthaei, Young, and Jones” or “MYJ,” the book is also known as the “Black Book” or the “Black Bible” because its original cover was black. The best filter designers still refer to this masterpiece six decades later.

After leaving SRI, Ted co-founded TRG-West and later TCI International, companies that designed and manufactured antennas. TCI antennas were the first to be designed using proprietary computer modeling tools, a practice that revolutionized the industry. Today, TCI supplies antennas to the U.S. Air Force for ground-to-air communication applications and to other customers for ship-to-shore communication and shortwave broadcast applications. TCI antennas are also used to support a broad range of commercial, high-speed communication activities.

After retiring from TCI as chairman of the board, Ted enjoyed golfing in Los Altos and skiing and hiking at Lake



Tahoe. He was predeceased by his first wife, Barbara Bjornstrom, and second wife, Elfrieda Bender. He is survived by his children, Alan, Ronald, and Ruth; and stepdaughters Evelyn, Doreen, and Lorna Bender.

**Source:** Obituary published in Stanford magazine ([stanfordmag.org/contents/obituaries-winter-2025](https://stanfordmag.org/contents/obituaries-winter-2025)); news article at SPX.com ([spx.com/articles/tci-international-celebrates-50-years-of-antenna-and-spectrum-product-innovations](https://spx.com/articles/tci-international-celebrates-50-years-of-antenna-and-spectrum-product-innovations)); article in Microwaves101.com ([microwaves101.com/encyclopedias/microwave-hall-of-fame-part-iii](https://microwaves101.com/encyclopedias/microwave-hall-of-fame-part-iii)); Bob Wenzel, "Return to Yesterday—Evolution of a Book," IEEE Society on Microwave Theory and Techniques, Number 138, Fall 1994 ([see PDF](#)); [Ancestry RonJones198 Tree](#)



## Thomas Logothetti

Thomas Joseph (Tom) Logothetti died San Jose in the spring of 2025 at the age of 87. He was born in Los Angeles County on May 8, 1938, to parents Vin and Flavia. A life-long resident of California, he loved the San Francisco Bay Area, where he lived for 60 years, but was always faithful to his beloved UCLA Bruins.

Tom held degrees in nuclear physics (UCLA) and sociology (Stanford). He had a particular skill for gathering and interpreting diverse data, and had a long and varied career that included working in the aerospace industry at North American Aviation and creating quality of life measures at SRI International. For 30 years he developed projections within the Planning Department and the Office of Budget and Analysis of the County of Santa Clara, where he met his future wife, Sally.

A man of many interests, Tom was an avid fan of the UCLA Bruins, 49ers, Giants, and Warriors. He loved gardening, the beach, classical music, reading, and camping. He had a lifelong fascination with etymology, and his capacity for creating puns was legendary. He was generous and competitive, especially in playing cards and sports.

Tom was a member of a large, extended, and devoted family. He faithfully attended Sally's performances with San Jose Symphonic Choir and his children's and grandchildren's sporting and artistic endeavors.

Tom is survived by his wife, Sally; sisters Sue and Doris; children Janet, Sheena, Chris, and Patrick; and three grandchildren.

**Sources:** Obituary published in The Mercury News, June 8, 2025 ([mercurynews.com/obituaries/thomas-joseph-logothetti-san-jose-ca](https://mercurynews.com/obituaries/thomas-joseph-logothetti-san-jose-ca))



## David Walker

David Thomas (Dave) Walker died suddenly on July 11, 2025, at the age 66, following an unexpected health event.

Dave was born on February 11, 1959, in McDonald, Pennsylvania, to Hugh Paul and Janice Hope (Brancart) Walker. He graduated from Canon-McMillan High School in 1977 and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh in 1983 and a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from Purdue University in 1988. He met his future wife, Noreen Atkins, while studying at the University of Pittsburgh, and they married in 1985.

After moving to Michigan, Dave began a career in research and education. He worked as a professor at the University of Michigan and as a research scientist with various companies. In 2010 he was one of the first to join SRI's Ann Arbor office, where he started, built, and led the Ocean Modeling group. His work in hydrodynamics reflected both his technical skill and a curiosity about the natural world. He often spoke of his work colleagues with admiration and counted many of them as friends. He was named SRI Fellow in 2017, and in 2020 he was inducted into Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Honor Society.

At SRI, Dave was a force. He will be remembered as an incredibly intelligent researcher, a thoughtful mentor, and an immeasurable influence. His complete grasp of all things technical and business was unequalled. His incredible work (and work ethic) contributed to his success, SRI's success, and even the success of his customers. "It is impossible to directly describe the breadth of Dave's impact on Navy operations due to the nature of some of his work, but he is widely respected and his expertise sought to address questions of critical importance to the United States." -- Dr. Tom Drake, Head of Code 32, Office of Naval Research (2017).

Dave and Noreen raised two daughters, Kathleen and Shannon, both of whom followed in their parents' footsteps to become engineers. Dave was proud of his daughters and delighted in being part of a family that could "speak the same language" of engineering.

Dave had many hobbies, including woodworking, but his passion was restoring his beloved 1985 Porsche 911. He was a member of the Rally Sport Region of the Porsche Club of America and enjoyed high-performance driving education track events and analyzing data he collected to improve his driving skills. Watching Formula 1 with Noreen was one of his favorite ways to relax. His constant companion, Milo the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, could often be found riding as

a passenger in the Porsche or sitting patiently in the garage as Dave worked on the car.

Dave is survived by his wife, Noreen; his daughters, Kathleen Ann Walker and Shannon Deirdre Walker; his mother, Janice Hope Walker; and his siblings, Tim Walker, Tina Walker Edwards, and Amy Walker.

Dave will be remembered as a wonderful husband, a proud and supportive father, a caring son and brother, a loyal friend, and a thoughtful coworker and mentor. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

**Sources:** Tom Almeida, Legacy.com obituary ([legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/david-walker-obituary?id=58869836](https://legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/david-walker-obituary?id=58869836))



## Melvin Wright

Melvin (Mel) Wright died at his home in Coupeville, Washington, on February 20, 2025, at 97. Born in 1927 in San Diego, California, to Buford James Wright and Lesley Lorraine Stewart, he grew up in

central California during the Depression. His teachers noticed his sharp intellect, and he was trained to be an electronics technician in the US Navy toward the end of World War II. After his discharge from the military, he completed a 2-year degree at Grant Technical College in Sacramento, California.

With his degree and Navy training, Mel and his best friend, Howard Burch, went to Alaska for 6 months to work for the military, learning while they were there that they had been admitted to Stanford University on the GI Bill. Mel completed his electrical engineering degree in 1951 and began working for the Stanford Applied Electronics Laboratory on campus.

In the early 1970s he joined SRI International, where he

worked in the Engineering group, applying his engineering and communications technology expertise to a variety of U.S. Government contracts. He was a valuable contributor to various studies of advanced systems and technologies, specializing in communications technology and systems.

Mel married Janet Stein in 1955, and they raised two daughters, Lesley and Elizabeth, in Los Altos, California. Mel was an enthusiastic gardener, with a special love of begonias and redwood trees. He enjoyed camping trips in the Sierras with his family, and he became an avid runner and cyclist, completing at least one marathon and several century bike rides. He took increasingly serious mountaineering trips, often 'bagging' multiple peaks in a single weekend. An expedition to Peru in the 1970s ended tragically with the death of two companions in an avalanche. Later, he led Sierra Club trips, sometimes with his daughter Lesley as the cook.

In the 1990s, Mel and his second wife, Marilyn Gottlieb, moved from their home in Menlo Park and retired to Coupeville, Washington, where they built a timber frame home, planted a garden full of rhododendrons and redwoods, and created a small paradise for birds. Together, they volunteered for many years at Meerkerk Gardens on Whidbey Island and researched their family genealogies. Mel had keen powers of observation and enjoyed exploring the natural world and pointing out plants, birds, and animals to his companions. He was a great storyteller, was always busy with a project, kept himself physically active, and loved sharing a good meal and a glass of wine with friends and family.

Mel is survived by his wife, Marilyn; his daughter, Lesley; his stepsons Maury Gottlieb and David Gottlieb; his three grandchildren; and his two great-grandchildren.

**Sources:** Obituary from Wallin Stucky Funeral Home ([wallinfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Melvin-Wright?obId=37762585](https://wallinfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Melvin-Wright?obId=37762585)); Stanford Magazine ([stanfordmag.org/contents/obituaries-summer-2025](https://stanfordmag.org/contents/obituaries-summer-2025))

## Don't forget to check out [srialumni.org/election](https://srialumni.org/election)

- Send your nominations to [steering@srialumni.org](mailto:steering@srialumni.org) by September 4, 2025 for President, Treasurer and Secretary
- Check out our our founding documents now available at [srialumni.org/about](https://srialumni.org/about)
- Online voting: September 11-18, 2025
- Reunion and announcement of officers September 25, 2025

Please let us know if you have questions, concerns or suggestions! Send any questions, comments, and/or nominations to: [steering@srialumni.org](mailto:steering@srialumni.org)

We encourage former staff members of SRI, Sarnoff, and Xerox PARC to join the SRI Alumni Association. The association, founded in 1996, can help you keep in touch with former colleagues, support the institute in various ways, and help perpetuate traditions and values. SRI Alumni Association members enjoy many activities and services:

- **Alumni Association Newsletter.** Published three times a year, giving news about SRI programs, Alumni Association activities, and individual members (see past issues at [srialumni.org/newsletter](http://srialumni.org/newsletter)).
- **Membership Directory.** A regularly updated resource of contact information for association members.
- **Annual Reunion Meeting.** An opportunity to:
  - Socialize with other Alumni Association members
  - View the Alumni Hall of Fame Induction ceremony
  - Hear a prominent speaker describe an important project or organizational development
- **Spring Fling.** A picnic or visit to a Bay Area point of interest; past trips have been to the Computer History Museum, the Hiller Aviation Museum, NASA-Ames, and the California Academy of Sciences
- **SRI Archives:** Association members maintain and catalog SRI's photographic and nonproject archives

**Your first year's membership is free!** Your membership thereafter will be \$25 per year. You can enroll or renew your membership at [srialumni.org/join](http://srialumni.org/join) Or, print, complete and return the application below. Once enrolled, you will receive future issues of the newsletter and invitations to all alumni events.

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