



THE BILODEAU AWARD  
FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY



Academic Year  
2020 – 2021



Mark and Ruth "Sam" Bilodeau led the Computer Science program with Mark serving as its first Academy Professor in the new Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science in 1989. They were both born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Mark graduated in the West Point class of 1972 as an Air Defense Artillery officer. He and Sam were married the following week in Minneapolis. They served together in the continental U.S. and Germany. In addition, Mark completed a tour in Korea. He attended graduate school at the University of Minnesota to earn a M.S. degree in Computer Science and later a PhD, afterward receiving the assignment he and Sam both desired at West Point in the Department of Geography and Computer Science in 1982. He was selected as Academy Professor in 1987 as a Major and led the Artificial Intelligence Center, the ancestor of West Point's current Cyber Research Center. As Computer Science Program Director during the formation of EECS, he laid foundations that still support the program: curricular standards, network and laboratory infrastructure, and the "whatever it takes to serve cadets" ethos that distinguishes all EECS programs to the present day. He retired in 1992 and quickly gained a reputation as a computer expert in the financial industry, first with CitiBank (later CitiGroup), then a startup company he helped found, C-BASS. He passed away in 2004, survived by Sam and two beautiful daughters, Rene' and Michelle.

Sam Bilodeau continues to generously give to the Academy and the EECS Department. She continues to be a major donor for the USMA Class of 1972. Every year, Sam sponsors a breakfast and luncheon for the EECS cadets on Projects Day, allowing the department to host their Projects Day in the Grand Ballroom of the West Point Club. In addition to the awards ceremony, Sam generously purchases and donates the EECS Coin.

The Mark and Ruth Bilodeau Excellence in Information Technology Award for the class of 2021 is presented to Ian Thomas. The Mark and Ruth Bilodeau Excellence in IT Award is presented annually to the graduating cadet majoring in IT that demonstrates exceptional academic performance throughout the IT curriculum. Ian has established himself as the consummate student of information technology, both in and out of the classroom.

Ian Thomas is from Littleton, CO. He received a Bachelor's of Science in Information Technology with a minor in Cybersecurity. Ian was inducted into the Computer Science Honor Society Upsilon Pi Epsilon in 2021. During his time at West Point, Ian applied himself both within academia and his extracurricular activities. In his free time, Ian became a NAUI certified SCUBA instructor and spent his time certifying cadets, staff, and faculty. His senior capstone, titled RADBOT, involved creating a ground robot capable of detecting and mapping nuclear threats. RADBOT won the Dean's interdisciplinary capstone award, one of the highest at West Point. Ian has commissioned as a Cyber officer and will begin his career at Fort Gordon in July.



CDT Ian Thomas and the RADBOT Team were recognized by the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, Dr. Rachel Sondheimer on Projects Day for winning the Dean's Inter-Departmental Project Award.

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Ian Thomas is the winner of the Bilodeau Award for Excellence in Information Technology.