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IEEE Celebrates 2009 Nobel Prize Winners

IEEE life members awarded for work with digital photography and helping link the world through fiber-optic networks

PISCATAWAY, N.J. – October 7, 2009 – IEEE, the world’s largest technical professional association, is proud to congratulate three of its Life Fellows – Dr. Charles K. Kao, Dr. Willard S. Boyle and Dr. George E. Smith – as recipients of the 2009 Nobel Prize in physics. Recognized for breakthroughs involving the transmission of light in fiber optics and inventing an imaging semiconductor circuit, the three scientists created the technology behind digital photography and helped link the world through fiber-optic networks.

"As a physicist myself, I am especially proud that these three members of IEEE have been honored with the Nobel Prize in physics," said IEEE President John Vig. "On behalf of our members around the globe, I congratulate these innovators for being recognized for advancing technology that has benefitted humanity."

Acknowledged for his 1966 discovery that showed how to transmit light over long distances via optical glass fibers, Dr. Kao helped build the framework for modern broadband communication networks that carry today’s high-speed Internet data and phone calls around the world.

Working together, Dr. Boyle and Dr. Smith invented the first imaging technology using a digital sensor, a charged-coupled device (CCD). CCD technology has revolutionized photography so that light could be captured electronically (in the form of pixels) instead of on film. "The inspiration of Willard Boyle and George Smith transformed an industry," said Dr. Gordon Day, President of IEEE-USA. "Replacing film with electronic devices made photography faster and cheaper, and digital imaging has led to great advances in the processing and distribution of images."

The IEEE, known as an organization that brings the best minds in science and technology together to benefit mankind is home to more than 19 Nobel Prize winners, ranging from Guglielmo Marconi’s 1909 Nobel Prize in Physics in recognition of his contribution to the development of wireless telegraphy to Paul C. Lauterbur and Sir Peter Mansfield’s 2003 Nobel Prize in Medicine for their discoveries concerning magnetic resonance imaging.

To learn more about IEEE, please contact ieee-PR@ruderfinn.com.

About IEEE

IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc.), the world's largest technical professional society, is commemorating its 125th anniversary in 2009 by "Celebrating 125 Years of Engineering the Future" around the globe. Through its more than 375,000 members in 160 countries, IEEE is a leading authority on a wide variety of areas ranging from aerospace systems, computers and telecommunications to biomedical engineering, electric power and consumer electronics. Dedicated to the advancement of technology, IEEE publishes 30 percent of the world's literature in the electrical and electronics engineering and computer science fields, and has developed nearly 900 active industry standards. The organization annually sponsors more than 850 conferences worldwide. Additional information about IEEE can be found at <http://www.ieee.org>.

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