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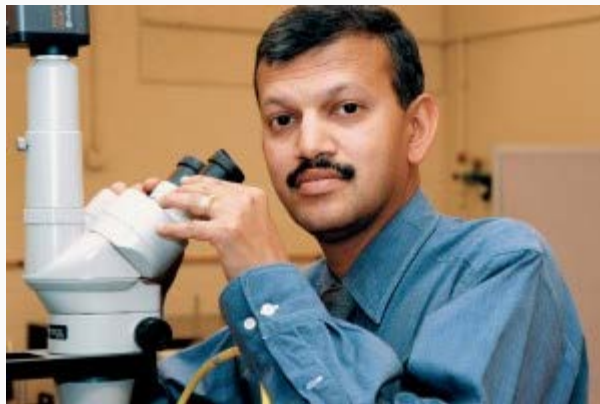


Engineering Faculty Honored by Peers

on February 28, 2012 | in [CSUN Leaders](#), [Faculty and Staff News](#), [Science and Technology](#)

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Dean S.K. Ramesh of the College of Engineering and Computer Science. Photo by Lee Choo.

CSUN is one of the top engineering schools in the region. So it just makes sense that the Engineer Council — whose mission statement includes “Advanc(ing) the art and science of engineering for the general welfare of humankind” — would look to CSUN’s engineering professors to bestow awards upon during the council’s annual “National Engineers Week Honors & Awards Banquet.” It’s safe to say that the quality and work of the CSUN staff engineered plenty of accolades.

In all, seven faculty members from CSUN’s College of Engineering and Computer Science walked away winners. The night ended with the dean of the college, S. K. Ramesh, picking up the John J. Guarrera Engineering Educator of the Year Award from the organization.

“It is deeply humbling to be recognized by one’s peers, and I am very fortunate to be working with such a wonderful team,” Ramesh said. “I am especially delighted to see several of our newest faculty members receive recognition for their outstanding work.”

The strength of its faculty has been an important factor in the College’s rapid growth. In 2010, the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) recognized CSUN’s undergraduate engineering programs as the fastest growing in the nation.

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CSUN's Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference "Pushes Research and Industry Forward"

on February 21, 2012 | in [Science and Technology](#)

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Attendees of the annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference.

Over six days in San Diego, thousands of people from around the world gather for California State University, Northridge's annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference. A pioneering idea now in its 27th year, the conference is the world's largest event of its kind, and the only one sponsored by a university.

People with disabilities make up the largest group of attendees and are "the reason we all gather to push the research and industry forward each

year," said Sandy Plotin, managing director of Cal State Northridge's Center on Disabilities, founded in 1983, which organizes the event each year.

The conference presents a unique opportunity for persons with disabilities "to have direct input on the creation of or modifications to assistive technology that is designed to make their lives easier," Plotin explained. "It also offers our students at CSUN and at other universities an opportunity to demonstrate their ideas for new and innovative technology and get direct feedback from those they want to use it, as well as professionals in the field."

Given such serious intentions, this year's keynote speaker might come as a surprise: A comedienne!

Geri Jewell, whose roots are in stand-up comedy, brought national attention to cerebral palsy and ability awareness in her role as "cousin Geri" in the 1980s hit television series "The Facts of Life." She was the first actor with a disability to have a regular role on a prime time series, and she remains both a working actor and a leading force in disabilities advocacy, using humor to

facilitate attitude changes.

For More: [Thousands to Gather at CSUN's Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference in San Diego](#) [CSUN Newsroom]

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Center on Disabilities, Events

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George Johnson: Lights! Camera! Man of Action!

by Stephanie Colman | on February 17, 2012 | in [CSUN Profiles](#), [Faculty and Staff News](#)

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George Johnson. Photo by Lee Choo.

George Johnson '84 (RTVF) remembers what it was like to be a student at California State University, Northridge. Earning his degree with an emphasis in television production required long hours.

“When I was a student here, the facility wasn’t as nice as it is now,” Johnson said. “Now, we have this beautiful facility with high-end equipment and it’s easier for students to produce projects.”

An 15-year veteran staff member with the department, now known as the Department of Cinema and Television Arts, Johnson is determined to help students take full advantage of their educational opportunities in order to achieve success. He is an equipment technician responsible for

Manzanita Hall studios and stages, editing suites, computer labs, facility maintenance and the Alan Armer Screening Room.

“In our department, it’s not like history where you can check out a book and go do your homework,” he said. “It’s very equipment-intensive. The students have to be able to film on campus.” Filming often takes place on weekends when students not only need access to production facilities, but must be supervised by an appropriate staff member. Johnson is always the first to volunteer. His dedication has left an impression on colleagues and students

“There isn’t anybody who does what George does in support of students and faculty,” said cinema and television arts professor Nate Thomas. “He’s never said ‘no’ to anything he’s been asked to do.”

Johnson has seen the campus at its best and worst. After graduating in 1984, he spent time in freelance television production and

landed an opportunity as a videographer with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. His job with the federal government brought him back to CSUN following the Northridge earthquake in 1994.

“We videoed all of the earthquake damage in order to get money for rebuilding,” he said. His job with FEMA led to his current position as a staff technician, a role that brings new challenges on a daily basis.

“I don’t know what a ‘typical day’ is,” Johnson laughed. “Every day is different; it’s like police work.”

When he’s not directly interacting with faculty and students, he’s busy managing a host of production equipment that, in total, equals a professional studio. From cameras and projectors to editing machines and a full green screen, Johnson oversees an estimated \$4 million worth of technical equipment. He’s constantly on the lookout for things in need of attention.

If an in-studio air conditioning system isn’t working properly, Johnson is the first to know. Multi-million dollar equipment requires full-time climate control. If he can’t fix the problem himself, he’ll quickly arrange to have it done.

Some issues that crop up are more unusual than others.

“We had an event where a drunken guy showed up. I had to call the police,” he said. “We’ve had homeless people come in looking for a place to sleep. When there was a bomb threat in Manzanita Hall, the police evacuated everyone but asked that I help them search for suspicious materials because I know every nook and cranny of the building. There’s always something quirky.”

In the end, Johnson said it’s all about helping students succeed.

“There’s a real sense of pride when students graduate and you know you’ve been a small part of that process,” he said. “Our students go on to do great things in the industry.”

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