

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Endowed Chair Will Honor UC Santa Barbara Internet Pioneer Glen Culler

UC Santa Barbara has received a \$500,000 gift from alumnus Huican Zhu and two anonymous donors to establish the Glen and Susanne Culler Chair in Computer Science. The endowed professorship will support the teaching and research of a leading scientist in the discipline that Glen Culler helped shape.

"We are deeply grateful to UC Santa Barbara alumnus Huican Zhu and the other generous donors for their vision and commitment to technological innovation and the future excellence of the campus," said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang.

"The Glen and Susanne Culler Chair honors the memory of Professor Culler and his seminal role in the development of the Internet, which has transformed the way we communicate and live.

I still remember how excited our campus was when Glen was awarded the National Medal of Technology by President Clinton. The Culler Chair will help us to honor Glen's extraordinary achievements here at UCSB and his global impact."

Culler, who died in 2003, was an emeritus UCSB professor of electrical and computer engineering.

He was awarded the National Medal of Technology in 2000 for his "pioneering innovations in multiple branches of computing, including early efforts in digital speech processing, invention of the first on-line system for interactive graphical

mathematics computing, and pioneering work on the ARPAnet."

The ARPAnet eventually became the Internet.

His wife, Susanne, also deceased, taught at Santa Barbara City College.

Zhu, a senior software engineer at Google, earned his doctorate in computer science at UCSB in 2000.

Without the financial support he received from the department, Zhu said he would not have been able to attend UCSB.

"I was really fortunate to be at UCSB where I learned all the training for my work at Google," he said.

"Google is a successful company, and I have benefited from that success.

I want to give back to the university so that it can hire good professors and attract good students to improve the performance of the department."

Amr El Abbadi, chair of computer science, expressed his sincere gratitude to Zhu and the anonymous benefactors for their generosity.

"Endowed chairs are critical for us to attract the brightest junior researchers and faculty available," El Abbadi said.

"The momentum that junior faculty bring to the department is invaluable.

The Culler Chair holds much potential to recruit outstanding faculty, especially in tight fiscal times."

Culler joined the UCSB mathematics faculty in 1959 and helped position the campus in the forefront of what would later become the field of computer science. With UCLA colleague Burton Fried, he designed and implemented the first interactive, mathematically based, online graphic system - thereby pioneering the now core concept of a graphical user interface as the most natural way to communicate with a computer. At UCSB, he created the first computer classroom in which students sat at workstations.

Later, Culler collaborated with UCSB engineers to design analog-to-digital converters for his online systems and made some of the world's first digital recordings.

His mathematical work on signal processing, and what came to be called "the theory of wavelets," helped to lay the groundwork for the digital transmission, processing, and analysis of speech – the basis for telecommunications, voice-mail, and computer games.

Previously, Zhu has provided support for graduate fellowships in computer science at UCSB.

While he was a doctoral student, he published several research papers in collaboration with UCSB faculty members on Web system performance and digital library system performance for the Alexandria Digital Library (ADL), a globally distributed geo-referenced digital library in the UCSB Library's Map & Imagery Laboratory.

The basic concepts behind the ADL have been widely adopted by Google Earth, Wikipedia, and others.

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