

Several years ago we established The Outstanding Service Award - an award inspired by Julie Pugh, the Society's First Executive Director, who helped get the Society up and running. Julie's effort was entirely volunteer work, and every time we give the award I feel we are also honoring her.

Luckily, there is no shortage of people deserving of recognition for their volunteer contributions to the Society. We, as a committee, a Society and a really a community are incredibly lucky to have so many dedicated people working so hard - at conferences - both here and abroad - for our publications - for Society governance - there is just a tremendous amount of work that people do and it is truly wonderful that this is the way it is.

All of this combines to make serving on what Roberta calls her "Favorite Committee" a real pleasure. When we choose to recognize an individual it comes as a total surprise to everybody, most especially the person (or people) we are honoring. There is no cash award, no trip to an exotic destination, just the heartfelt thanks we express to someone who, invariably, turns a little bit red by the time they get up here to accept the award.

Over the past years we have honored people like those standing around me - David Andersen, Peter Milling and Andy Ford, individuals who have gone above and beyond reasonable effort and just kept going. These are also individuals who have done outstanding work in the field of System Dynamics, and while this award is not about that contribution, it is not surprising that the dedication crosses over.

This year we are honoring someone who, like Julie Pugh, was never at the forefront of research in our field, but he has been at the forefront of something. Since 2000, this conference has become a bit more memorable. Every year we have a fantastic number of great photographs, and if you go in and study those photographs you might notice a pattern - there is one person who appears less frequently than others - one person who is almost always on the other side of the lens.

Dean Christensen, please join us on the stage so we may express our thanks.

For many years, Dean has provided a creative and community-building service to the Society 0 at every conference for the past seven years, and some before that, he has documented every aspect of the conference from satchel stuffing to, the banquet to the closing ceremony. Beyond that, he has created a photographic record of each local site. He has captured important moments at each conference as well as some unguarded but priceless ones.

Because of his efforts there is a clear and colorful visual history of our conferences that will always be available.

He has been our very own paparazzi, or at least a polite version thereof. Every year he makes the rounds at the banquet to photograph the tables of participants enjoying themselves. Over the years he has captured pictures of speakers, of participants networking with acquaintances old and new, of our sponsors, and of special events like the Poster Symposia and Fireside Chats. He has taken pictures of previous award winners!

This photographic chronology of our conferences is invaluable. Thanks to Dean's efforts the images that he has created will allow us to relive some of our conference experiences time and again. His 'focus' and dedication are truly appreciated.

For everyone else with a camera - please make sure you capture Dean receiving this award as we are not going to let him do it himself.