SPIE Recognizes Hanes & Donnelly with International Honors

Fenna Hanes has been selected as the winner of the international SPIE 2009 Educator Award for her contributions to photonics and optics education. And Judith Donnelly has been named as one of the first Senior Members of SPIE. They will be recognized at SPIE’s annual meeting Optics & Photonics in San Diego this August.

SPIE’s annual Educator Award is granted in recognition of outstanding contributions to optics education by a SPIE instructor or educator in the field. Hanes’ award citation states “in recognition of her leadership in several NSF-ATE (National Science Foundation-Advanced Technological Education) projects, and her unfailing enthusiasm for optics/photonics technology. Ms. Hanes has fostered the growth of optics education in secondary schools and colleges throughout the United States.”

Prof. Judith F. Donnelly of Three Rivers Community College states, “Among Fenna’s most enduring accomplishments are the dozens of educational/industrial alliances she facilitated during more than ten years involvement in optics/photonics education. She has worked closely with scores of companies, recruiting participation in educational conferences and workshops ranging from serving as the host site to providing guest speakers and plant tours.”

Hanes’ nomination was a group effort. “It was Fenna’s idea that teachers and industry could learn from each other to the benefit of both... This nomination of Fenna for the SPIE Educator award is, in fact, made on behalf of the twenty PHOTON2 teachers and counselors who met in San Diego [for the 2007 SPIE Optics & Photonics conference] and wished that Fenna Hanes be acknowledged for her contributions to optics education at their institutions,” said Donnelly, who submitted the nomination on their behalf.

Judith Donnelly is also being recognized by SPIE for her years of activism in optics/photonics education and in SPIE itself. This year SPIE has initiated a new honor, the Senior Member program, awarded annually to just 20 members world-wide. Requirements for the honor include more than 10 years of significant professional achievement in industry or academia, SPIE participation, and outstanding leadership in educational outreach, project management and/or entrepreneurial operations.

Donnelly’s nomination is “for specific achievements in optics education and outreach” during her 31 year career at Three Rivers Community College. She co-founded TRCC’s Laser and Fiber Optics Technology Program and was instrumental in the conception and design of TRCC’s new high-tech optics lab. 2008 SPIE President Kevin Harding stated, “SPIE is a member-driven organization that relies on such people to achieve the mission of the Society. By distinguishing these important contributions... we recognize the hard work that has grown our industry into a wide-reaching and influential discipline.”