

Stanford 50: State of the Art and Future Directions of Computational Mathematics and Numerical Computing

On March 29-31, 2007, a special Conference on Computational Mathematics was held at Stanford University. The year 2007 marks the 50th anniversary of the arrival of Professor George Forsythe at Stanford, which led to a half century of leadership in the area of computational mathematics at Stanford. This conference was designed to promote the interaction between mathematicians, numerical analysts, physical scientists, engineers, and computer scientists. The conference covered Computational Mathematics in a broad sense, and was unusual in that it both looked back at what has been accomplished in the past 50 years, as well as forward to what may be expected in the future. Specifically, for the former, we brought many well known senior leaders in the field of computational mathematics to Stanford, while for the latter, attracted the participation of many junior scientists and Ph.D. students.

The conference was unusual in several other respects:

- All 48 talks were plenary talks. Of these 42 were given by well known mid-career or senior scientists. The other 6 slots were reserved on Saturday for the winners of two poster competitions that were held on Thursday and judged by a panel of judges. One of these was for graduate students and one was for “junior scientists” (PhD less than 10 years ago). Doubtless the exposure these young scientists and students received for their work was of great value to them.
- A panel on future directions of the subject, “The Next 50 Years”, was held on Saturday afternoon.

About 250 people attended the conference, a very high number considering that only 48 talks were presented. Poster presentation was reserved for the student and young scientist poster competition.

A banquet to celebrate Gene Golub’s 75th birthday was held on the Friday night. LLL funds were not used for this event, which was paid for by individual attendees. In view of the Professor Golub’s sad passing on Nov 16, 2007, we feel very fortunate that we held the conference when we did and that it was such a success.