

Transcript of Remarks at SPIE Award Ceremony, February 4, 2020

Sarah Gitter: My uncle, Dr. Frank Splitt, is not able to join us tonight because he's now the fulltime caregiver for his beloved wife, my Aunt Judy, who has Alzheimer's disease.

Some of you may already know Dr. Splitt by virtue of his professional work in industry and academia, or by his prolific writing on social issues. I've known Frank for 43 years as my uncle who has given us a model for how to live a good and purposeful life.

He has been passionate about his work while always trying to make the world a better place to live, as evidenced by the world-wide distribution of his 1991 essay, "Creating our Common Future," as well as by work with his wife Judy, as Midwest leaders for the Beyond War Foundation.

Frank has always been concerned about the exploitation and abuse of so-called student athletes at America's colleges and universities and continues to campaign for academic integrity in intercollegiate athletics.

His concern for the environment was demonstrated early on as a proponent of sustainability mechanisms, including end-of-life recycling in the process of product design, beginning in the 1980s—a time when most of us were simply enthralled by the unfolding wonders of the internet age.

And when most people retire and focus on their own family life, Frank added a new fight to save Ballard and other lakes in Northern Wisconsin from the ravages of invasive species and human impact. This story and others are told in his books.

The following is his acceptance speech for the award that he asked me to deliver.

Frank Splitt: First of all I want to say that I am honored to be recognized with this lifetime achievement award, especially by this esteemed organization at this late date in my life.

It was 16 years ago when I was invited to deliver a keynote address to your 2004 symposium in San Jose. At the time I was just a mere lad of 73 years of age. The invitation to speak was spearheaded by a preeminent SPIE fellow, Professor Manijeh Razeghi.

To me, Professor Razeghi is a rare person in the sense that she was acutely aware of the educational and societal implications of the interrelated environmental, energy, and economic issues covered in my keynote address: "The Fraying Web of Life and Our Future Engineers."

So, now it is most fitting that I thank Professor Razeghi who not only nominated me for this award, but who was also an unofficial cheerleader over many years—providing

timely encouragement when I was advocating contentious reform initiatives in Engineering Education and Intercollegiate Athletics.

All of this and her work with the Society of Women Engineers have been clear manifestations of the attributes of a Renaissance woman that go far beyond her work as a pioneering leader in the field of semiconductor science and technology.

I must add that it has been my good fortune to have worked with giants in many fields. For example, in Engineering Education Reform, I literally stood on the shoulders of Ed Ernst, Irene Peden, John Prados, and Jerry Cohen; while in College Sports Reform it was Ted Hesburgh, Jim Duderstadt, and Carol Simpson Stern, as well as my colleagues Jon Ericson, David Ridpath, and Allen Sack in The Drake Group.

Finally, my thanks also go to Matt Novak and all of the SPIE staff who have worked to assemble this world-class symposium.

I am indeed grateful to be honored with this award.

Sarah Gitter: Dr. Splitt is always recruiting more supporters to the causes he most cares about, so he asked me to mention his website as a free source of his books, “An Odyssey of Reform Initiatives” and its Sequel, available at futurevectors.com.

Thank you very much.



Northwestern University Professor Manijeh Razeghi (right) pictured with Sarah Gitter (left) at the 2020 SPIE Awards Ceremony