

Alum's Generous Gift Funds Engineering, Computer Science

Thanks to Paul R. Bonderson Jr. (EE '75) and his wife, Sandi, students in the College of Engineering will have the opportunity and the space to "get their hands dirty" designing and building applied research projects.

This year the Bondersons gave \$2 million toward a \$5 million pledge to construct a 20,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art, multidisciplinary senior projects center, with Cal Poly providing matching funds. The Bondersons' pledge is one of the largest cash gifts ever received by the university.

"The Bonderson Student Project Center will provide large, flexible work spaces equipped with the latest technology and applicable to every major in the college," says Peter Y. Lee, dean of the College of Engineering. "This gift truly takes us to the next level of leadership and excellence in engineering and computer science education.

"We are extremely grateful for this timely gift that serves to advance our project-centered, hands-on engineering and computer science curriculum," Lee says. "Key to this curriculum is the capstone senior project, which today often replicates the same kind of team-based, multidisciplinary projects that our graduates encounter in industry."

Bonderson notes that his own senior project led to his first job.

"I designed and built an electronic clipboard for collecting traffic information, and Trekonix, a small company that distributed traffic signals and manufactured signal controllers, was interested," Bonderson says. "They hired me and bought my design for \$1,500. I thought I was rich!

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Paul and Sandi Bonderson

Photo courtesy Paul Bonderson

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so helpful to me. I want students today to have the opportunity to undertake truly cutting-edge projects, and especially multidisciplinary projects, because that's what industry needs."

Bonderson is vice president of engineering for Brocade Communications Systems, a leading supplier of open-fabric solutions that provide the intelligent backbone for storage area networks (SANs). A Brocade co-founder, he has more than 25 years of industry experience at Sun Microsystems, Data System Design, and Intel.

During his more than nine years with Sun, he held a number of director-

level positions developing data storage products, network server products, and servers. Bonderson implemented Sun's first Fibre Channel products as director of central technologies, where he was responsible for all corporate mass storage development.

In addition to the \$5 million he has pledged for the projects center, Bonderson also has given \$1 million for general renovation and upgrading of Cal Poly's computer science laboratories and for development of a wireless, reconfigurable, team-supportive, state-of-the-art software design studio.

"Paul Bonderson provides a wonderful example of an alumnus who has been widely successful and who is motivated to give back to the institution that helped launch his career," says Dan McGee, director of donor relations and the Centennial Campaign for the college. "The impact of his gift on student learning is inestimable – it will enable us to offer a curriculum that is truly applicable to the 21st century."