

A collaboration of five international conferences and two symposia devoted to mechanical engineering design research form the 2004 ASME Design Engineering Technical Conferences and Computers and Information in Engineering Conference that will take place in Salt Lake City, Utah, September 28 through October 2. At the age of 54 the Biennial Mechanism and Robotics Conference, meeting every two years since its inception at Purdue University in 1950, is solidly middle aged. The youngest is the Design for Manufacturing Conference which met for the first time at the 1996 DETC that I had the pleasure of hosting in Irvine, California. The conferences on design automation, computers and information in engineering, and design theory and methodology round out the list with ages of 27, 23 and 15 years, respectively.

This event also includes two symposia, which in time may become conferences on their own. The symposium on International Issues on Engineering Design is meeting for a second time and includes the topic of “design engineering in service to humanity,” an explicit expression of what I would expect we all feel is the role of the technology that we spend so much time studying. The topics in the newest program, the Symposium on Integration of Materials Microstructure and Chemistry in Multidisciplinary Design Optimization for which the acronym IMCMDO has been shortened to IMDO, illustrate that specification of material mixtures, assemblies, and microstructure are now within the scope of the mechanical designer.

Central to these conferences is, of course, the presentation of reviewed papers and their collection into proceedings, and perhaps journal publication. For 21 years the final steps of publication of our papers have involved the name Ray Ramonas. I know him as the individual who assists me in organizing papers for each issue of the Journal of Mechanical Design and who prods me to complete an editorial on time. He is the ASME Production Editor and he retires with this issue. I share the sentiments of ASME’s Ms. Cynthia Clark, Managing Editor, Technical Publishing, who writes “Ray is the consummate publishing professional: he takes great pride in his work and has developed excellent relationships with all who have crossed his path. Authors, editors, vendors, and, most of all, colleagues will truly miss him.”

**J. Michael McCarthy**