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REMEMBERING RUDOLF E. KALMAN (1930 - 2016)

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Professor Emeritus Rudolf E. Kalman passed away on July 2, 2016. He was 86 years old.

Kalman was part of the UF Engineering family for more than 20 years. He is famously known for the development of the Kalman filter, a mathematical algorithm that removes “noise” from streams of data and increases accuracy. His method, a common discipline in the engineering and science communities, revolutionized modern automatic control and system theories.

“His contributions to science and engineering facilitated many of our modern conveniences including long-distance flight, space exploration and military defense systems,” said Jacob Hammer, a professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.



Rudolf E. Kalman receiving National Medal of Science from President Barack Obama. Photo by Ryan K. Morris.

Kalman conceptualized his theory in the late 1950s and came to a breakthrough in 1960. His method was quickly well-received and used in numerous aeronautical and military projects, including the Apollo Program. To this day, the Kalman filtering technique remains a staple in the field of systems and control. In 2009, President Obama personally honored Kalman with the National Medal of Science, the highest recognition bestowed for advancement in science, technology and innovation.

At the University of Florida, Kalman was a mentor and friend to many members of the research community. In 1972, he became a graduate research professor and director of the Center for Mathematical System Theory. For more than two decades, he served as faculty in the electrical and computer engineering department and mentored numerous talented researchers. One of Kalman's former PhD students, Pramod Khargonekar, later went on to become dean of the UF Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering, assistant director of the National Science Foundation's Directorate of Engineering (https://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=126811), and most recently, vice chancellor for research at the University of California, Irvine (<https://news.uci.edu/research/uci-appoints-pramod-khargonekar-vice-chancellor-for-research/>).

In 1985, Kalman became one of four recipients of the Kyoto Prize, commonly referred to as the Japanese Nobel Prize. He was awarded the Charles Stark Draper Prize for lifetime contributions to engineering by the U.S. National Academy of Engineering and the IEEE Medal of Honor by the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, amongst many other notable awards.

Kalman passed in his home in Gainesville, FL. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Constantina nee Stavrou, their two children, Andrew and Elisabeth, and their families. His contributions to engineering remains pivotal, and he leaves behind a lasting legacy.

Dr. Kalman's obituary: <http://forestmeadowsfh.com/obituaries/professor-rudolf-emil-kalman/>
(<http://forestmeadowsfh.com/obituaries/professor-rudolf-emil-kalman/>)

Dr. Kalman's funeral will be held at the Forest Meadows Cemetery on Friday, July 8, 2016 at 10 a.m. All are welcome.

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