Texas A & M Engineering to honor outstanding seniors Thursday

Texas A&M University

The Dwight Look College of Engineering at Texas A&M University will honor six students with its Craig C. Brown Outstanding Senior Engineer Award during a banquet Thursday (Oct. 28).

Seniors Anand Ganapathy, Michael Hackemack, Yehia Mohamed Omar, Joel Turtle, Kathryn West and Sarah Woods will receive the annual award due to their academic achievement, character and leadership abilities.

Anand Ganapathy is a biomedical engineering major and National Merit Finalist from Bay City, Texas. He is described as compassionate, with the ability to handle complex problems, and noted for his commitment to excellence and high level of personal and professional maturity as demonstrated through class work and interaction with professors. His volunteer time has been spent as a medical intern in ER and cardiopulmonary medicine, a volunteer medic in the community, and a three-year member of the Texas A&M Emergency Care Team, also serving as its webmaster.

He was treasurer for the Texas Aggie Swing Cats and active in numerous other campus organizations. His work experiences include database management as an M.D. Anderson intern, shadowing thoracic surgeons at Scott & White as a surgery department preceptor, and as a research intern in the Samuel Laboratory at the Texas A&M Health Science Center. He will graduate in May 2011 with the distinction of having completed the Foundation Honors, University Honors, Undergraduate Research Scholars and Engineering Scholars programs.

Michael Hackemack is a nuclear engineering major from Richmond, Texas. This summer he completed a second internship at Comanche Peak Nuclear Plant and continues undergraduate research started over a year ago at the Interphase Transport Phenomena Laboratory on campus, where he is reported to be an exceptional contributor.

Hackemack is active in a number of student organizations and last year was company affairs officer in the American Nuclear Society chapter. He serves as a Boy Scout assistant scoutmaster, participates each year in Big Event and contributes considerable hours toward church retreats for high school students. Michael says his time at Texas A&M has given him the desire to give back to his community, his family, his university and God. He says he believes that much is expected from engineers because they have been given much, in terms of intellect and analytical thinking, and that they must hold themselves to a higher standard of responsible morality. Hackemack has been cited for his character, positive attitude, strong work ethic and exceptional skills. He will graduate in May 2011.

Yehia Mohamed Omar is a mechanical engineering major from Egypt. His greatest strength may be time management, balancing outstanding academic accomplishments with extracurricular leadership activities. With ASME he has served as the executive board's senior representative, managed the publicity committee of the largest student chapter in the nation, planned public events and represented the organization on the Student Engineers' Council. He says he is most proud of his community service, including Big Event and AggieCAN, and is especially dedicated to his ongoing work with Al Amaanah Refugee Services in Houston.

Omar worked as a co-op with Trane-Ingersoll Rand for eight months, as well as summers for Dresser, Baker Hughes and Wollschläger Engineering Tools. He also conducted undergraduate research at the Advanced Engine Research Laboratory on campus. He is described as a conscientious student leader with sophisticated engineering skills and as a most effective goodwill ambassador when his department needs an effective and personable tour guide. When Omar graduates in December 2010, his diploma will be accompanied by the Engineering Project Management Certificate.

Joel Turtle is a mechanical engineering major who grew up on the Canadian prairies and moved to Pullman, Wash., at age 8. Ten years later he was thrilled to become the first member of his family to be granted U.S. citizenship. Turtle has augmented his engineering studies with a neuroscience minor and biomaterials research, and says he looks forward to M.D./Ph.D. training that will apply engineering skills to problems in medicine, especially in the field of smart prosthetics.

As an undergraduate researcher he has been described as "truly phenomenal," a quick learner with great expertise and independence yet a teachable spirit. He has served three years as a leader on the Student Engineers' Council, mentored engineering freshmen two years and still found time to play six intramurals sports. This past summer Turtle traveled to Spain for Study Abroad, and the previous two he was at Washington State University as part of a National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates program in materials science. Turtle will graduate in May 2011 with University Scholars distinction.

Kathryn West is a biomedical engineering major from Lafayette, La. She is a four-year member of the Student Engineers' Council, currently serving as vice president-external and last year as chair for all SEC service events. She is described as embodying "the true spirit of an Aggie, valuing integrity, honor and moral responsibility." She is active in the select Maggies: Women in Leadership and the Biomedical Engineering Society, and has chaired Angle Tree, a campus toy drive led by engineering students.

Since her sophomore year West has demonstrated a passion for research, working in a campus laboratory focused on early cancer detection. Research, she says, "makes her tick because it gives her an outlet to help others while continuing to grow academically." Summers 2009 and 2010 were whirlwinds as she experienced

a five-week French immersion program in Nova Scotia, Canada, traveled to New Zealand and Australia, and gained nine weeks of neuroscience research experience at New York University's Summer Undergraduate Research Program. West will graduate in May 2011 and plans to pursue a doctorate.

Sarah Woods is a chemical engineering major from Birmingham, Ala. "I was born an engineer, wondering how things worked and ready to solve the next problem," Sarah says. Yet she also has the distinction of starting the Aggie Women's Swim Team as a walk-on, advancing to NCAA All-American, scoring consistently in the top eight at Big 12 Conference championships and qualifying for USA Olympic trials. One observer says, "While Sarah's virtual full-time job as a student-athlete has conflicted with her ability to hold elected offices in student organizations, she has demonstrated leadership in other ways."

Woods has mentored, instructed, tutored and coached in academic as well as athletic settings. Whether representing Texas A&M at AIChE regionals or NCAA swimming championships, she is described as a natural leader who encourages her team, steers others in the right direction and manages the workload to keep projects ahead of schedule. She completed four years of athletic eligibility last spring and was a facilities engineer intern this summer with ExxonMobil Development Company. Woods will graduate in May 2011.

The Craig C. Brown Outstanding Senior Engineer Award is the most prestigious honor bestowed on a graduating senior in the Dwight Look College of Engineering. The award is based on outstanding scholastic achievement, leadership and character.

The award had its beginning in 1947 as the Engineering Faculty Senior Award. In 1996 the award was renamed to recognize Craig C. Brown for his vision to expand and enhance the program through a permanent endowment. This year's recipients will receive a $5,000 educational grant and cast medallion. Their names will be added to the program's recognition plaque.

Brown is a 1975 civil engineering graduate and past recipient of the award. He also earned a Master of Business Administration degree from Texas A&M and today is the president, owner and chief operating officer of Bray International Inc.

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