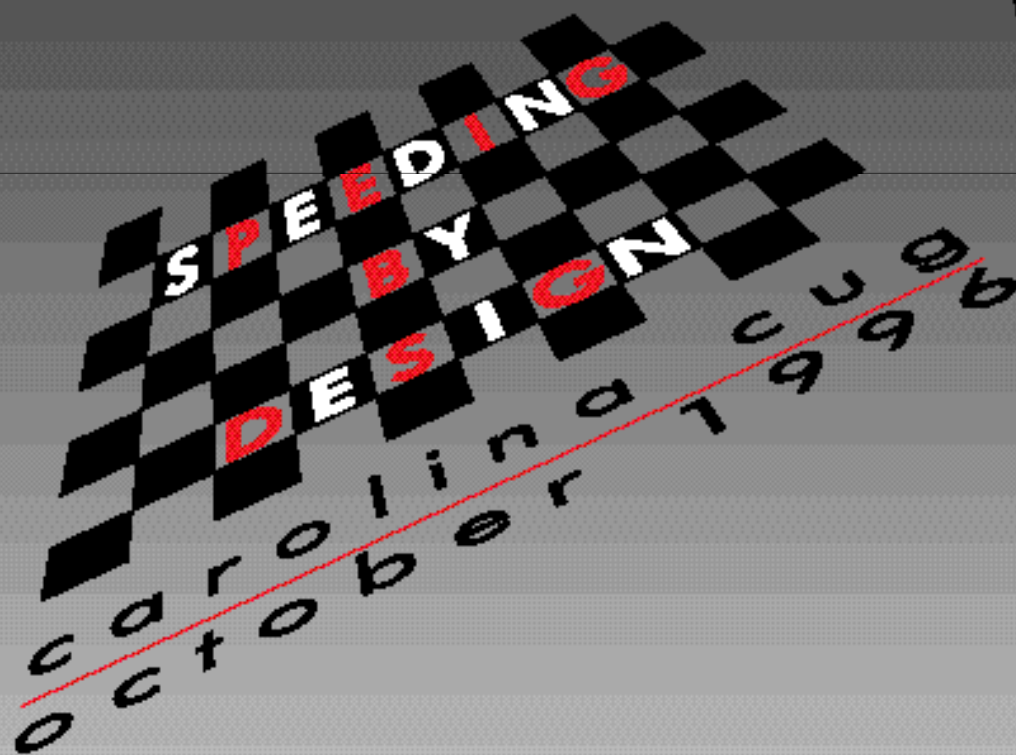
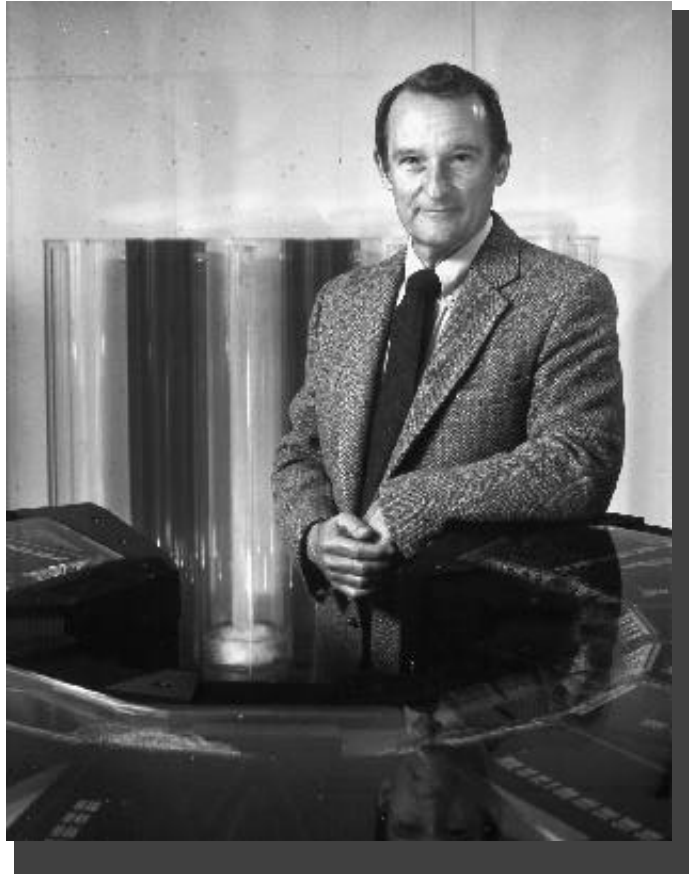


1996 FALL PROCEEDINGS



Cray User Group, Inc.



Seymour Cray Changed Our Lives

Seymour Cray passed away recently, and his life has been well covered by the press. I thought I would skip his vita and talk about how Seymour changed our lives. In the wonderful scheme of things, one technology feeds another, one discovery enables several more, and from a foundation of knowledge the life of the people living on Earth gets better and better. Seymour Cray was one of those few heroes in history who pushed technology and capability forward at an accelerating speed.

It has been said “Cray invented the supercomputer and then kept reinventing it.” As he invented and developed each of his technology breakthroughs, he also had to invent the tools it took to manufacture, test, and repair the substance of each leap forward. For each leap forward, there were other advances—in lithography and resolution required, just to name a couple. He had to invent plumbing and cooling techniques as he went along. The point I want to make here is that the technology of Seymour Cray was “enabling technology” that changed the life of almost everyone.

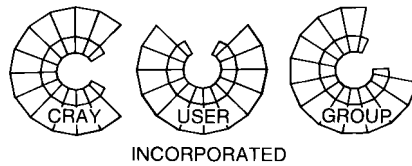
As he pushed forward—increasing speed, memory, and bandwidth of his computers—he enabled us to solve bigger and more important problems. It is my humble opinion that the peace we enjoy in most of the world today and the end of the cold war is due to computer power and the ability to

build and numerically simulate the effect of weapons and weapon systems. Life changed for the better when we were able to stop having to actually blow things up and to study things like global climate change, the environment and forecasting the path of hurricanes all with numerical simulation using supercomputers. We benefit from increased automotive safety and design, faster pharmaceutical drug design, petroleum exploration, airplane design, gene splicing and sequencing, and on and on. His contribution to his fellow men and women has been considerable.

Seymour Cray started or helped start several companies, each time when he felt the company had become too large for him. He is quoted as saying “Thank heaven for start-up companies or we’d never make any progress. People who get unhappy with structure in companies can move on and start their own, take the big risks, and occasionally find the pot of gold. I think that’s just wonderful.”

Seymour Cray was a great man who changed the course of our civilization. I consider him with Ford and Edison and others who introduced technology that changed our lives for the better and could be used as a tool to move forward, solving problems that were unsolvable before. I treasure the fact that I knew one of the world’s great heroes.

Gary Jensen



Proceedings

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