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Three of the winners will be honored at Automate in Detroit on June 8: Michael P. Jacobs of Applied Manufacturing Technologies (AMT), Oussama Khatib of Stanford University and Marc Raibert of Boston Dynamics.

Six robotics pioneers win 2022 Engelberger Awards

Awards will be presented to three at Automate 2022 in Detroit on June 8, and three at Automatica in Munich June 20, 2022.

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Posted by Elizabeth Engler Modic

Automation/Robotics

The **Association for Advancing Automation (A3)** announced six winners of the 2022 Engelberger Robotics Awards, the world's most prestigious robotics honor. At a special dinner in conjunction with the **Automate 2022 Show and Conference** in Detroit on June 8, Michael P. Jacobs of **Applied Manufacturing Technologies (AMT)** will be honored for his leadership in automation while Oussama Khatib of **Stanford University** will be awarded for education and Marc Raibert of **Boston Dynamics** for technology.

Three more winners will also be celebrated at **Automatica** in Munich on June 20:

- Bertil Thorvaldsson of **ABB** for leadership
- Bruno Siciliano of the **University of Naples** for education
- Melonee Wise of **Zebra Technologies** for technology

The Engelberger Robotics Award is named after the late Joseph F. Engelberger, known throughout the world as the founding force behind industrial robotics. Since its inception in 1977, the Engelberger Robotics Awards have been presented to 134 robotics leaders from 17 different nations for excellence in technology development, application, education, and leadership. Each winner receives a \$5,000 honorarium and commemorative medallion.

“As the robotics industry grows, so does our list of extremely talented nominees deserving of this coveted Engelberger Award,” says Jeff Burnstein, president of A3. “In their unique ways, each of these six remarkable individuals have played prominent roles in shaping the robotics industry we’re a part of today, from educating future roboticists to advancing the role of mobile, industrial, and collaborative robotics in manufacturing facilities and warehouses alike. We expect more great things from this year’s winners and look forward to celebrating them at Automate and Automatica.”

2022 Engelberger Robotics Awards winners

The six honorees were selected by the Past Chairs of the A3 Technology Strategy Board. Khatib, a roboticist and a professor of computer science at Stanford University, is credited with seminal work in areas ranging from robot motion planning and control, human-friendly robot design, to haptic interaction and human motion synthesis.

“Joe Engelberger’s farsighted vision of people and robots working together over the simplest or most complex of tasks is now within reach, and the potential of these emerging robots is being anticipated throughout the world’s societies,” Khatib says. “Receipt of this award for my robotics work toward his vision – an award bearing his name – is a profound honor.

Wise, previously the CEO of Fetch Robotics until its acquisition by Zebra Technologies in 2021, now serves as the vice president and general manager of Robotics Automation for Zebra. For nearly 20 years, Wise has been designing, building, and programming robotic hardware and software. She was the second employee at Willow Garage, a research and development laboratory specializing in robotics, where she led a team of engineers developing next-generation robot hardware and software. In 2014, she and other members of Willow Garage founded Fetch Robotics, which is best known for its autonomous mobile robots (AMRs) for warehouses.

“I’m truly honored to receive the Joseph Engelberger award for Technology,” Wise says. “Just as Engelberger forged the path of industrial robots in manufacturing automation, the Fetch Robotics team has followed in his footsteps to bring AMRs to the forefront of manufacturing and logistics automation. I am deeply inspired by Engelberger’s work, and with Zebra, I hope to continue to push the boundaries of robotics technology to enable the adoption of robotics in new industries and applications.”

Jacobs, the founder and CEO of AMT, is an expert in the robotic automation industry. Prior to AMT, at GMF Robotics (now FANUC), he pioneered the product development and market introduction of robot simulation and offline programming systems.

“Recognition by industry leaders with an award that bears the name of Joseph Engelberger is a highlight of my career,” Jacobs says. “I am truly honored and deeply humbled.”

The other Engelberger winners have led or been involved in advancing the automation industry in myriad ways:

- Marc Raibert is the founder, former CEO and now chairman of Boston Dynamics, a robotics company known for creating BigDog, Atlas, Spot and Handle.
- Thorvaldsson is the global product manager at ABB Robotics, a global leader in power and automation technologies. He joined the company in 1976
- Siciliano, an Italian engineer, academic and scientific popularizer, is a professor of Automatic Control at the University of Naples Federico II, Director of the ICAROS Center, and Coordinator of the PRISMA Lab at the Department of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology.

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