



Bernard Frischer Receives Pioneer Award from VSMM

At its annual meeting on October 6, 2005 in Ghent, Belgium (<http://belgium.vsmm.org/>), **The International Society for Virtual Systems and Multimedia** (VSMM; www.vsmm.org) gave its Pioneer Achievement Award to **Bernard Frischer**. In giving the award, **Neil A. Silberman**, Director of the **Ename (Belgium) Center for Public Archaeology** (www.enamecenter.org/) which hosted the VSMM meeting, singled out Frischer's influential publications on virtual cultural heritage as well as the many innovative 3D computer models of cultural heritage sites that Frischer's labs at UCLA and the University of Virginia have made. The Pioneer Award is the highest honor given by VSMM, several hundred of whose members attended the meeting in Belgium.

Bernard Frischer (B.A. Wesleyan University, 1971; Ph.D. University of Heidelberg, 1975; Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, 1976) taught at UCLA from 1976 to 2004, when he moved to the University of Virginia. He founded the Cultural Virtual Reality Lab at UCLA in 1996 (www.cvrlab.org). In accepting the award, Frischer thanked those who have worked in his lab and spoke about the bright future of virtual heritage but cautioned that greater attention needs to be paid to the preservation of computer models. "It is ironic that as we creators of computer models work to preserve the treasures of humanity's cultural heritage, we generally take little heed of the need to preserve our own work," he said.

Virtual reality technologies and their applications provide a new medium for the advancement of human expression, interpretation and preservation of the human spirit and essence of humanity. VSMM seeks to address these concerns and issues and provides a foundation for integrating together the human, technological and strategic aspects of VR under the umbrella of international exchange, cooperation and development. The society covers a very wide range of topics of interest, including not only pure technological issues but also mathematical, medical, agricultural, educational, psychological, artistic, social, and other issues related to virtual systems and multimedia information processing. Next year's annual meeting of the society is to be held in Xian, China.