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2ND ANNUAL RANDY PAUSCH SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS ANNOUNCED: HIS LEGACY CONTINUES

CALABASAS, Calif. – August 5, 2009 – The Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences (AIAS) has named the four winners of the second annual Randy Pausch Scholarship: John Kolencheryl, Carnegie Mellon University; Sebastian Gosztyla, DePaul University; William Graner, University of Southern California; and Kimberly Kiser, Carnegie Mellon University.

"Being able to help such talented young adults pursue their dreams to be interactive entertainment creators is one of the Academy's most important pursuits," said Joseph Olin, president, AIAS. "If these awards can help students to 'Dream Big,' as Randy Pausch was fond of saying, than we are truly helping to keep his wishes alive."

Pausch, who passed away last year, impacted millions of lives through his book, "The Last Lecture." Pausch emphasized overcoming obstacles and pursuing one's dreams.

Each of the winning students exemplifies the meaning of that sentiment, including John Kolencheryl, from a small town in India. From the time his father brought home a ZX Spectrum he became so captivated by games he decided to follow his dream to enter the video game industry. John is getting his Masters in the Entertainment Technology program at Carnegie Mellon University, where Randy Pausch was a professor. "I'm extremely honored to receive this scholarship in memory of a man that touched millions," said Kolencheryl. "Randy Pausch encouraged me to take a shot at making my dreams a reality. This scholarship gets me one step closer towards achieving my dreams."

Sebastian Gosztyla knows about dreams; he was born in Bielsk-Biala, Poland. When he moved to the United States at 10, he learned how to play video games even though he didn't speak English. Though Gosztyla was offered scholarships at other schools, he decided to study at DePaul University's Game Development program. Despite the financial struggle; he chose to pursue his vision. "I feel extremely honored and thrilled to receive this award. Efforts such as the Randy Pausch Scholarship help to change the perception of education in video games from a silly day dream to a recognized degree. It's a relief to know that there are people out there who support the dreams of students like myself," says Gosztyla.

William Graner, graduate student in Interactive Media at University of Southern California, put it into real life terms. "Thank you so much for your help and support. I am funding my graduate education primarily through loans and work study, and your contribution to my education will significantly ease my financial burden giving me more freedom in my career in the games industry." Graner's goals are to contribute to his community and improve the world through his work.

"I have long wanted to pursue a career in the art development of games and other interactive media, but have struggled in the past with whether or not I was good enough," said Kimberly Kiser, who is working on her Master of Entertainment Technology at Carnegie Mellon University. "Randy Pausch, in describing how he achieved his dreams in the Last Lecture, made me realize the only thing holding me back from attaining my own dreams were simply foolish insecurities. I decided I had to let go of those doubts, and let myself get on with what I love to do. To be chosen as a recipient of a scholarship established in his memory is a tremendous honor, and I hope I am able to live up to his vision." Kiser plans on becoming a texture and environment artist to create games for museums and schools, teaching children the history of art and architecture in an engaging, fun way.

As Randy named one of his chapters, "Dream Big."

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