Honoring 50 years of advancing research

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Anil Jain presented honorary doctorate by Autonomous University of Madrid

For advancing pattern recognition for 50 years, Anil Jain of Michigan State University was presented an honorary doctorate by the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM) during ceremonies in Spain in September. Jain is a University Distinguished Professor of computer science and engineering and a member of the National Academy of Engineering.

The solemn ceremony was presided by UAM Rector Rafael Garesse and included members of national and international university communities from Spain, Portugal, Holland, Canada, and the United Kingdom, along with friends and relatives of the invested and academics of the university.

Jain, an internationally recognized expert in biometric and pattern recognition, was awarded the honorary doctorate at the initiative of the Department of Electronic Technology and Communications of the Higher Polytechnic School.

Javier Ortega, vice-rector of Innovation, Transfer and Technology at UAM and a distinguished professor at the Superior Polytechnic School, praised Jain in his commendation.

“It was a pleasure and honor especially significant and long-awaited for being the first Doctorate Honoris Causa proposed since the creation of our engineering school and, specifically, the Department of Electronic Technology and Communications,” Ortega said.

He noted Jain’s impressive scientific output has more than 180,000 total citations to his works and an \( h \) index of 176 in Google Scholar (which measures the balance between scientific production and its impact).

In accepting the academic honor, Jain congratulated UAM for its 50th anniversary and said, “it is a coincidence that I began my career in the field of research more or less at the time that La Autónoma was born.”

Jain said he began transferring codes in 1969 to cards punched on an IBM 360. It was the origin of a five-decade
trajectory of investigating the recognition of patterns.

“Specifically, in the design of machines that recognize patterns automatically,” Jain explained.

Advances in recognizing fingerprints and other biometric identification modes are translating into real success stories today, he continued.

Jain congratulated his Spanish colleagues and said, "Professor Javier Ortega-García of the UAM heads one of the most powerful and distinguished research groups, not only in Spain but in the world. The works that are carried out in his laboratory are at the forefront of the field of voice, signature, and multi-biometrics."

Also honored during the ceremony was historian, hispanist and English medievalist Peter Linehan of the United Kingdom, who was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Department of Ancient, Medieval, Palaeographic and Diplomatic History.

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