The Department of Electrical Engineering conferred 68 Ph.D., 396 M.S., and 89 B.S. degrees during the academic year. At USC’s 78th annual commencement, friends and family gathered with the graduates to celebrate this memorable event.

VITERBI MUSEUM

Andrew and Ema Viterbi School of Engineering’s hidden jewel is the Viterbi Museum, which is located on the second floor of Ronald Tutor Hall. It consists of three rooms of display cases, artifacts, photographs, papers, memos and a video presentation of Andrew Viterbi’s illustrious career. The museum also includes Impressionist-style murals depicting viterbi’s life along the ceiling, painted by Italian artist, Sandro Chia.

At the entrance of the museum, the video, “Andrew and Ema Viterbi: The Journey and the Legacy” plays on screen. It describes the escapes of both the Viterbi family and the Finci family from World War II Europe as well as the impact of their gift on the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. The family room traces the journeys of the Viterbi and (erna Finci) families in Italy and Sarajevo prior to World War II, depicting each family’s struggles to reach the United States. The mural in the family room depicts a celebration of Andrew and Ema’s union, bringing together the swifl of blue sky and sea-green ocean waves as the two reach out for their futures. The gallery room has the technological innovations that Viterbi pioneered. Glass-encased displays document key moments in the young scholar’s career with photographs, papers and magazine articles about his work. The library room is where a selection of Andrew Viterbi’s papers, books and other publications will be housed. The mural in the library depicts faces overlapping each other, symbolizing the vast number of people that Viterbi has not only influenced in the past, present and future, but has connected.

“The museum is not a tribute. The Viterbi don’t need a shrine, nor have they ever asked for one,” said C. L. Max Nikias, who was Dean of the Viterbi School at the time of the dedication.

Kuehl Receives Lifetime Achievement Award from 2006 Annual USC Convocation

On March 30, 2006 Professor Hans Kuehl received the USC Lifetime Achievement Award, which is awarded to recognize faculty for their notable contributions to the university, their profession, and the community.

Kuehl is a professor emeritus of Electrical Engineering/Electrophysics who is an internationally recognized authority on “solitons” — single waves propagating in plasmas and optical fibers. Solitons, which retain their shape after colliding with each other, are beginning to have an important technological impact in the area of fiber optic communication, where light pulses in the form of solitons can be used for broadband information transmission. Earlier in his career, Kuehl formulated the basic theory governing the interaction of antennas and plasmas. He was one of the first theoretical pioneers to predict and describe in detail the phenomenon of plasma resonance cones, which produce significant enhancements of the electromagnetic fields of an antenna in a magnetized plasma.

Other USC Awards that Kuehl has received include the University of Southern California Associates Teaching Excellence Award, the USC Archimedes Circle Faculty Service, and the Eta Kappa Nu Outstanding Electrical Engineering Faculty Award. In addition, Kuehl served as the chairman of task force at USC that developed an innovative new electrical engineering curriculum that became effective in 1999.

On June 1, 2006 Yannis Yortos was officially appointed Dean of the Andrew and Ema Viterbi School of Engineering. “Yannis Yortos has shown tremendous leadership skills since arriving at USC,” President Steven B. Sample said. “He is a world-class scholar who understands the Viterbi School’s limitless potential, and he is dedicated to mobilize the school’s faculty, students, alumni and staff to fulfill that potential.” Provost C. L. Max Nikias said: “Professor Yortos has won acclaim for describing what the new engineer of the 21st century must look like. He has argued that the future of engineering — as well as that of other disciplines that seek to impact our world — will require a ‘language of brain and brain, digital information, which necessitates creative alliances between engineers and counterparts in other sciences, the social sciences, the humanities and arts.”

"I am humbled and honored to be named Dean of the USC Viterbi School of Engineering," Yortos said in accepting the position. “The school has become a global leader in innovations in engineering, and I am thrilled to be part of its future enhancement and growth. In this century, engineering will flourish in exciting new areas that require interdisciplinary research and teaching, and alliances across disciplines and across the globe. I am convinced that with the continuing, unparalleled help of our friends, the Viterbi School will reach new heights of excellence in creating new paradigms of engineering education and research.

L’Chaim! USC Hillel Dinner Honors Golomb

University Professor Solomon Golomb received an evening of praise and remembrance January 24, 2006 and USC Hillel came away with $100,000 in funding. USC President Steven B. Sample, Viterbi School naming donor and trustee Andrew J. Viterbi, Leventhal School naming donor Kenneth Leventhal, Provost C. L. Max Nikias, Viterbi School Dean Yannis Yortos, Nobel Prize winner George Olsh and more than 220 well-wishers filled the Skirball Center. The admirers came from as far as central California and San Diego, adding still more honors to one of USC’s most celebrated faculty members.

The occasion was USC Hillel’s annual L’Chaim Award Dinner, a fundraising occasion for the benefit of the Jewish student group, which, per its mission statement, “provides the foundation for Jewish student life at USC, offering a secure, inclusive and nurturing environment for all Jews who are part of the USC community.” Golomb has been a steadfast supporter of the group for decades, and wisely pronounced his feelings as the reason he had “offered himself as a sacrifice” for the fundraiser.

The warmth and specificity of the tributes to Golomb, a polymath linguist/mathematician/philosophy/game designer and beloved father, broke through the award dinner format in the presentations of speaker after speaker.
Quantum and Classical Information Theory and
Type-2 Fuzzy Systems."

JERRY MENDEL received a Pioneer Award from
Emeritus of Electrical Engineering.

TODD BRUN was promoted to Associate
Professor of Electrical Engineering with tenure.

JOHN CHOMA presented an invited short
course on Broadband CMOS Electronics at the
2006 IEEE International Symposium on Circuits
and Systems which was held on the Island of
Kos in Greece.

IGOR DEVETAK won the NSF Faculty Early
Career Award. His title, "A High-Level
Framework for a Unified Theory of Quantum
and Classical Information Theory and
Thermodynamics", received a five-year $400k
award.

MICHEL DUBOIS was elected Fellow of the
Association for Computing Machinery.

ROBERT SCHOLTZ gave a plenary lecture,
"CDMA in Retrospect" at the 2006 Second
International Symposium on Communications,
Control and Signal Processing.

LEONARD SILVERMAN was honored with an
endowed chair for being the longest serving
dean in the school's history.

GANDHI PUVVADA was promoted to Professor
of Engineering Practice.

ONE of the most honored members of
the Viterbi School faculty has written his
autobiography. His memoir, Alaska to
Algorithms: My Journey from the Alaskan
Frontier through the Dawn of the Digital Age,
describes his remarkable career beginning
with his childhood in Fairbanks, Alaska.

Reed made fundamental contributions to numerous engineering
disciplines. He is perhaps best known for his co-invention of the
Reed-Solomon codes, which provide an efficient and reliable way
of protecting digital information from noise.

In the book Reed tells the story of a time he was asked to sign
autographs. When an early CD was shown and played, an
audience of students at his alma mater Caltech deliberately
scratched and played it again to show the music had survived.

Reed’s description of his years at USC in Electrical Engineering’s
Signal and Image Processing Institute working with graduate
students who went on to develop the jpeg image compression,
form a rich chapter, as does his own development of an image
compression system for AOL.

President Steven B. Sample contributed the introduction to the
book: “Few people have left as indelible a stamp on our
world as my fellow engineer Irving Reed. And he has done
so over the course of a half-century career that has been both
revolutionary in scope and unassuming in style. Hundreds of
millions of men, women and children have been impacted by
the digital computer, and its impact will likely affect tens of
billions of persons to come — but perhaps fewer than a hundred
thousand people realize that it was
Irving Reed who provided much of the
mathematical underpinning that made
modern computer design possible.”

In addition to memoirs of encounters with
great scientists and engineers, Reed also
tells his own personal story, marked by his
first wife’s mental illness and the tragic
early deaths of three of his children.

To read an excerpt from Alaska to Algorithms, follow this
link http://viterbi.usc.edu/links/?204