Ralph Griswold

Born May 19, 1934, Modesto, Calif.; inventor and creator of the SNOBOL programming language in the 1960s, and the Icon language in the 1980s.

Education: BS, physics, Stanford University, 1956; MS, electrical engineering, Stanford University, 1960; PhD, electrical engineering, Stanford University, 1962.

Professional Experience: Bell Telephone Laboratories: member, technical staff, Programming Research Department, 1962-1967, supervisor, Computer Languages Research Group, 1967-1969, head, Programming Research and Development Department, 1969-1971; University of Arizona: professor, Department of Computer Science, 1971-1990, head, Department of Computer Science, 1971-1981, Regent's Professor, 1990-present.

Honors and Awards: Top-10 Award Winner, Westinghouse National Science Talent Search, 1952; Distinguished Teaching Award, Faculty of Science, University of Arizona, 1988.

Following the completion of his doctoral work at Stanford, Griswold joined the Bell Telephone Laboratories in New Jersey with an initial assignment in the Programming Research Studies Department, where he worked on developing programs for the manipulation of symbolic expressions. This work led to the development of the SNOBOL programming language with Ivan Polonsky and Dave Farber in 1963. In 1967 Griswold was made supervisor of the Computer Languages Research Group, and in 1969 he was appointed head of the Programming Research and Development Department with a variety of responsibilities ranging from programming language research to the operation of a time-sharing system for document preparation. In 1971 Griswold left the Laboratories to head the computer science program at the University of Arizona, where he continued his work on programming languages and eventually developed the Icon language.

QUOTATION

"The relative lame humor exhibited in choice of SNOBOL was not limited to the name of the language itself. Dave [Farber]'s error messages such as "ALL OUT OF SPACE, YELL FOR HELP" and "NO END STATEMENT, WHISPER FOR HELP" and the cryptic "RECOMPILE NOT ENABLED" quickly became wearisome to users." (Griswold 1981)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Biographical

Griswold, Ralph E., "A History of the SNOBOL Programming Languages," in Wexelblat, Richard L., ed., *History of Programming Languages,* Academic Press, New York, 1981, Chapter 13.

Significant Publications

Griswold, Ralph E., David J. Farber, and Ivan P. Polonsky, "SNOBOL, a String Manipulation Language," J *ACM,* Vol. 11, No. 1, 1964, pp. 21-30.

Griswold, Ralph E., and Madge T Griswold, *A SNOBOL4 Primer,* Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ., 1973.

Griswold, Ralph E., and Madge T. Griswold, *The Icon Programming Language,* Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ., 1983.

Griswold, Ralph E., and Madge T. Griswold, "History of the Icon Programming Language, "J. *ACM,* Vol. 28, No. 3,1993, pp. 53-68.

UPDATES