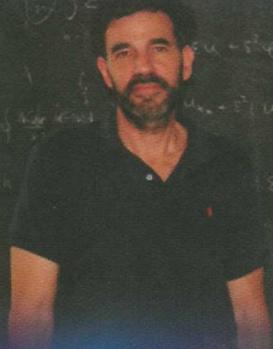


Colorado Engineer

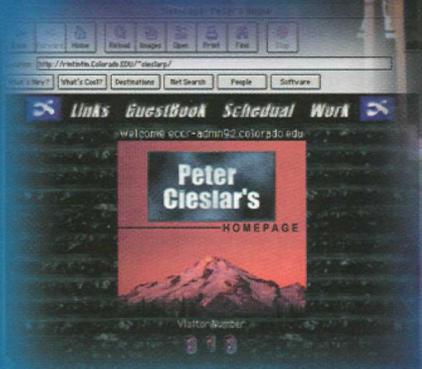


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Renaissance Man

Interview with Ken Goldberg

by Ted Zeiger

that those really helped me later. Having an academic position, you spend a lot of time and a big part of your life talking to people. If you've read books and seen films you can talk to people about just pretty much anything. And



Dr. Ken Goldberg of U.C. Berkeley

this panel [Conference of World Affairs] is a good example of that. I was totally winging it. But that's a product of years of going into classes where I didn't know what I was really doing but I just threw myself and tried to sort of feel comfortable doing it.

CEM: Did you always want to teach?

KG: No, I thought I was going to be a multimillionaire. I had this idea that I really wanted to be a business man. I never stopped to question what my motives were, but I knew that I wanted to make enough money to be comfortable. But the problem was that I didn't

like business classes. I didn't like the materialistic world or the type of people I found in that racket. Well things gradually evolved after I took a year off and went to Scotland after my junior year. I ended hanging out there with philosophers. They converted me and convinced me, after a year, that I should be something more academic. I should use my head instead of just making money, thus I took that route. I think everyone has to choose for themselves, you don't have to listen to high school guidance counselors. Its usually in graduate school that you say il like this." That's when you work really close with professors and see how they're working and you can say il want to do this."

CEM: Of the projects you've worked on, what was your favorite?

KG: Well, it's hard to say. I'm reminded of my uncle who died few years ago, he was an artist. I went to visit him and he had all his paintings sitting around in the living room and I said iWhat's your favorite?" He replied iDo you think I could tell you with all of them listening." I liked all the projects, in fact, sometimes I find that I see something in an older project that I hadn't seen at the time. So I see how it led to a new project. It's hard to rank them in any particular way. The one thing I feel proud of is I invented this robot gripper, called Kinematically Yielding Gripper, which we got two patents for after graduate school. It's nice because I did my thesis around it, the theoretical analysis of the mechanics of the gripper. I had hardware and software together.

CEM: What sort of projects are you working on today?

KG: We are getting into some very small stuff. We're looking at things made of silicon. Have you heard of micro-electrical mechanical systems?

CEM: You mean like micro-motors?

KG: I'm very interested in this. The first time I saw them, they caught my eye and I said "This makes perfect sense." And the technology has devel-

