



ΣΤΑΝΦΟΡΔ ΥΝΙϚΕΡΣΙΤΥ

DESIGN DIVISION

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT  
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-4021

September 29, 2009

Colleagues:

It is a very great pleasure to be present on this occasion, and an honor to be the immediate Past President of IFToMM.

The 40 year history of IFToMM coincides with my own professional career. I took up my first regular academic position in 1969. This has meant that I have recently been reflecting on the changes in our field that have occurred over the past 40 years.

Mechanisms and machines are still with us. In fact they are more diverse and numerous than ever. They are, however, very different from those of 40 years ago. Back then the game was single input linkage mechanisms with all coordination done mechanically. Computers were in their infancy and were batch-processing mainframes. Embedded processors and digitally controlled actuators were not even dreams. Researchers were learning to use computers to analyze and design mechanisms. Even computer graphics was something not yet thought of.

IFToMM has grown and changed with our technical field, as it must do. If the organization ceases to change and adapt as the technical field changes it will quickly become irrelevant. Thus we add new technical committees and permanent commissions, or redefine the existing ones. Likewise the caste of characters continually changes. We have lost several of our founding fathers and three of our past presidents, but we have new, energetic people taking up the leadership of the organization.

IFToMM has become much more internationally diverse as we have added member organizations from all over the world, and we welcome participation from their communities.

I have, myself, been an active participant in IFToMM for a good part of those forty years. My first IFToMM event was the first ROMANSY symposium in Udine in 1973. I was accompanied by my wife and two very young children, who raised some eyebrows by running up and down the room during the banquet. I have participated in 9 of the 12 World Congresses, and nearly all of the ROMANSY meetings, plus many other IFToMM sponsored events. It is now time for me to fade out. I wish the organization great success in future, and hope to be around to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KJ Waldron'.

Kenneth J. Waldron  
Professor (Research)