IU Awards Honorary Degrees to Two International Friends

At its 168th commencement exercises on May 10, Indiana University conferred honorary doctorates upon two prominent internationalists with strong IU ties, José Vilarasau of Spain and Eero Aarne Pekka Tarasti of Finland.

Vilarasau, who received an honorary Doctor of Laws, is president and CEO of one of Europe’s major banking institutions, the Barcelona Savings & Pensions Bank, known as “La Caixa.” Tarasti, who was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, is a noted Finnish musicologist and semiotician and serves as chair of the musicology department of the University of Helsinki.

As one of Europe’s top financial leaders and philanthropists, Vilarasau has had a formative influence on the economic, political, educational, and cultural life of Cataluña and Spain. “Sr. Vilarasau is a world class leader whose understanding of and commitment to higher education is clear. He is a true visionary,” said Dean for International Programs Patrick O’Meara.

Under Vilarasau’s leadership, the “la Caixa” Foundation devotes 50 percent of the Barcelona Savings & Pensions Bank’s annual profits to funding cultural, educational, social, and civic programs throughout Spain. The foundation has supported museums and libraries, AIDS education and medical research, arts education for schoolchildren, and numerous other exemplary programs showing how the private sector contributes to society’s future.

One of the groundbreaking programs initiated by Vilarasau is the “la Caixa” Graduate Fellowship Program, which annually selects some of Spain’s most talented graduate students to study abroad in the United States, Great Britain, and France on two-year fellowships.

Indiana University has administered the U.S. program since 1985, taking responsibility for the students’ selection, placement, orientation (in Bloomington), and fellowship management. Each year, IU faculty travel to Spain to assist in the selection of the 40-50 candidates who will study in major U.S. institutions across the nation. The fellows pursue the widest range of academic and professional fields, including the graphic and performing arts, the physical and medical sciences, engineering, architecture, business and economics, and law.

Before moving to the savings bank industry, Vilarasau, who holds a doctorate in industrial engineering, had a distinguished career in the Spanish civil service. Since heading “la Caixa”, he has become a close friend of IU, serving as a founding member of the IU International Council.

Tarasti is widely regarded as one of the preeminent figures in the relatively new interdisciplinary area of inquiry known as musical semiotics, where he has had a significant impact on the scholarly community worldwide. “Tarasti has successfully linked music systematically to other intellectual disciplines, a commitment... worthy of emulation by all humanists,” said IU music professor David Neumeyer.

Tarasti’s 18-year association with IU has included research fellowships at the Research Center for Language & Semiotic Studies and the Institute for Advanced Study. He has written a number of foundational semiotics texts, such as the path-breaking book, *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (1994), published by Indiana University Press and *Continued on page 20*
IU's Puri Ranks Among World's Top Statisticians

A recent survey by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, has ranked Madan L. Puri (Mathematics, IUB) fourth most prolific statistician in the world. Among statisticians in universities, such as IU, which do not have a separate department of statistics, he is ranked first.

Puri has published more than 200 research articles on statistics, probability, and mathematics, coauthored two advanced research monographs, and edited or coedited proceedings at nine international conferences in the United States, Europe and Japan.

The international scope of Puri's career is truly impressive. A fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, the American Statistical Association, and the Royal Statistical Society, Puri is an elected member of the International Statistical Institute and has twice received the Senior U.S. Scientist Award of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

Puri has been honored by the government of the Federal Republic of Germany “in recognition of past achievements in research and teaching,” and has also been invited by the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Sciences to visit Japan under its Visiting Professorship Program, to conduct cooperative research with Japanese scientists. In 1991, Puri was distinguished visitor in the London School of Economics and Political Science at the University of London, England. His visit was sponsored by the Suntory-Toyota International Center for Economics and Related Disciplines.

This year, the Citizen Ambassador Program of People to People International has invited Puri to lead a delegation of 25 professionals specializing in statistics to visit the People's Republic of China in October. The delegation will exchange information and ideas with Chinese counterparts and obtain firsthand impressions of the statistical information system of China.

Last year, Puri was presented with a book, Research Developments in Probability and Statistics: Festschrift in Honor of Madan L. Puri on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday. The editors of the book, professors Manfred Denker and Edgar Brunner of the University of Göttin gen, Germany, came to Bloomington to present the book. Fifty-two authors from around the world wrote articles in honor of Puri.

A graduate of the University of California at Berkeley (Ph.D.) and Punjab University in India (D.Sc.), Puri came to IUB as a full professor in 1968 from the world renowned Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, New York University. He has held visiting professorships at numerous universities in Auckland, New Zealand; Berne, Switzerland; Göteborg, Sweden; and Göttin gen, Germany.

Puri's research at IU has been supported by several federal agencies for sums totalling more than $1.2 million.

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technology and with Richard E. Stryker regarding overseas study student exchanges.

Ma and his colleagues were especially eager to explore possibilities for developing a new curricular program concentrating on community sports and recreation. Such a program would be consistent with the Chinese government’s commitment to promote recreational sports among the general populace through the “National Sport For All Project.”

During their week here, the members of the Chinese delegation worked out the basis for Lynn Jamieson’s (Recreation & Park Administration) trip to Beijing in May-June to set up a pilot course on the philosophy and management of recreational sports.

Jamieson taught the intensive course with the help of a BUPE colleague acting as interpreter. The community sports and recreation curriculum will eventually include courses on leisure and recreation, recreational programming, leadership techniques, and administration.

As increasing numbers of international students come to Bloomington to continue their studies in the areas of allied health, kinesiology, and recreation and park administration, the numbers of international students from the People’s Republic of China will also continue to grow.

— RMN

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written partially while he was in Bloomington as a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study. More recently, he helped to initiate a joint agreement between IUP and the Finnish Academy of Sciences to publish a series of edited volumes, “Acta Semiotica Fennica.”

His publications—approximately 300 books and articles about semiotics, aesthetics, and music theory and analysis—are available in English, Finnish, French, and German.