

The State Committee for Research honors Alaska's

Northern Innovators



Eric Swanson

Northern Innovators Hall of Fame Member

Eric Swanson serves in a variety of technical and managerial roles in academic, entrepreneurial, industrial, and volunteer activities. He is on the board of directors of Acacia Communications, the Danish National Quantum Innovation Center, and other corporate boards and is an affiliate of the MIT Deshpande Center for Entrepreneurship and other programs at MIT.

Mr. Swanson is a co-founder or founding board member of five start-up companies: Advanced Ophthalmic Devices acquired by Zeiss Meditec in 1994, Lightlab Imaging acquired by St. Jude Medical in 2009, Sycamore Networks (Nasdaq IPO 1999), Acacia Communications (Nasdaq IPO 2016), and Curata (private). These companies have evolved over time and shipped several billions of dollars in products around the world.

Mr. Swanson is a co-inventor of optical coherence tomography and has advanced the field through numerous theoretical, experimental, translational, and industrial contributions. He has developed novel fiber optical communication technology including

fundamental contributions to one of the world's first All-Optical Networks. He has developed novel free-space laser communication technology including fundamental contributions to one of the world's first inter-satellite laser communications systems.

Mr. Swanson has co-authored 78 journal articles, given 177 conference presentations, invited talks, and lectures, has 35 issued US patents, and 8 book chapters. In 2002 he was elected a Fellow of the OSA for "Pioneering contributions to the fields of intersatellite laser communication systems, fiber optic communication networks, and biomedical optical imaging." In 2017 he was elected a Fellow of IEEE for "Contributions to optical coherence tomography and leadership in optical networking." In 2002 he was a co-recipient of the Rank Prize in Opto-Electronics for "Outstanding contribution to the science and application of opto-electronics." In 2012 he was a co-recipient of the 1M€ Champlimaud Vision Award. In 2017 he was a co-recipient of the National Academy of Engineering Russ Prize which recognizes an engineering

achievement that "has had a significant impact on society and has contributed to the advancement of the human condition through widespread use." In 2017 he was a co-recipient of the 2017 European Inventor Award.

Mr. Swanson holds a B.S. summa cum laude in Electrical Engineering from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and an M.S. in Electrical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Mr. Swanson came to Alaska in 1970 when his parents moved to Fairbanks and lived there for the next six years engaged in all the wonderful, adventurous, and beautiful things Alaska has to offer. In 1977, he worked on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline construction project stationed on the North Slope at Happy Valley just south of Prudhoe Bay as a heavy equipment operator at the age of only 16. The Alaskan can-do attitude is demonstrated in his achievements. His recent success only highlights his innovations and contributions to telecommunications, medical imaging, and entrepreneurship over the course of his career.