



Professor Sanjit K. Mitra
University of Southern California

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Building 482 Auditorium

Signals and Communications Expert Joins SIPI as First Varra Professor

Sanjit Mitra brings an international reputation to a world-leading Viterbi institute

National Academy of Engineering member Sanjit K. Mitra, formerly of the University of California at Santa Barbara, is the newest faculty member at USC's internationally known Signal and Image Processing Institute (SIPI).

He joins the Viterbi School department of electrical engineering/ systems as the Stephen and Etta Varra Professor. The hiring of Mitra is part of a major initiative announced in 2004 by then-dean C. L. Max Nikias to recruit a number of outstanding engineering faculty.

"The Viterbi School has been engaged in the last few years in a systematic effort to recruit established, exceptional senior faculty, the very best researchers in the world, to join us," said Viterbi Dean Yannis Yortsos. "On behalf of Provost Nikias, I am delighted to announce that Professor Mitra, a towering figure in his field, is our latest success in this effort."

Mitra's specialty is one that has long been a strength for the Viterbi School and SIPI.

"The Viterbi School has a long heritage of exceptional achievement in signal and image processing and related fields," said Professor Alexander A. Sawchuk, chair of the Viterbi Department of Electrical Engineering-Systems, the home of SIPI.

"This strength goes back decades, when Dean Zohrab Kaprielian made it one of the foundations of the School's growth," Sawchuk continued.

"Mitra is a modern giant in this specialty, and with his arrival, we are uniquely poised to continue this tradition. We are immensely excited that he has joined our faculty."

"It was an easy decision," said Mitra in a phone interview. "Many SIPI faculty are old friends," he noted, adding that he regarded USC signals experts Sol Golomb and Irving Reed as "gurus." Mitra knew Harry Andrews (retired from 3M Corporation) and William K. Pratt (subsequently at Compression Labs, Sun Microsystems, Photon Dynamics, and now at PixelSoft) — two former Reed graduate students who were part of SIPI from the beginning, founded it in 1971, and laid the foundations for image compression and character recognition technology.

Mitra also mentioned Antonio Ortega, Shrikanth Narayanan, and Jay Kuo as faculty he knows well, along with outgoing EE/electrophysics chair John Choma. When he was called up for a pre-appointment interview, "I said, I know all these people." (Narayanan, a generation younger than Mitra, calls the new arrival "my guru.")

Mitra knows another Viterbi School EE faculty member even better: Prof. Urbashi Mitra is his daughter.



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And institutionally, he is already extremely familiar with USC, having been on the external advisory board for the department of electrical engineering, having previously helped former dean Len Silverman in a departmental review. "I've been up for seminars many times," he said, adding that he was delighted to be coming. "I see a great future for USC," he said, "and I want to help them achieve it."

Mitra received a B.S. with honors in physics from Utkal University, India in 1953, an M.S. in radio physics and electronics from the University of Calcutta in 1956, and an M.S. in electrical engineering from the University of California, Berkeley in 1960. He received his Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley in 1962.

Mitra is internationally known for his work in analog and digital signal processing and image processing. He has published over 600 papers, is the author or co-author of 12 books, and holds five patents. He is a member of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the International Society for Optical Engineering (SPIE), and a member of the European Association for Signal, Speech and Image Processing (EURASIP).

He is the recipient of the 1973 EE. Terman Award and the 1985 AT&T Foundation Award of the American Society of Engineering Education. He received the 1989 Education Award and the 2000 Mac Van Valkenburg Society Award of the IEEE Circuits and Systems Society. In 1989, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation of Germany honored him with the Distinguished Senior U.S. Scientist. He received the 1996 Technical Achievement Award and the 2001 Society Award of the IEEE Signal Processing Society. He also was awarded the IEEE Millennium Medal in 2000, the McGraw-Hill/Jacob Millman Award of the IEEE Education Society in 2001, and the 2002 Technical Achievement Award of EURASIP. He is the co-recipient of the 2000 Blumlein-Browne-Willans Premium of the Institution of Electrical Engineers (London) and the 2001 IEEE Transactions on Circuits and Systems for Video Technology Best Paper Award. Just last week, he received the 2006 James H. Mulligan, Jr. IEEE Education Medal.

Mitra has received honorary doctorate degrees from the Tampere University of Technology, Finland and the Technical University of Bucharest, Romania. He was given the University Medal of the Technical University of Slovakia at Bratislava. He is an Academician of the Academy of Finland, a member of the Norwegian Academy of Technological Sciences, a foreign member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and a foreign member of the Academy of Engineering of Mexico.

He has served the professional community in various capacities, including a term as President of the IEEE Circuits and Systems Society in 1986, and has held visiting appointments in Australia, Austria, Brazil, Croatia, Finland, Germany, India, Japan, Norway, Singapore, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.



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