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David Carlson Receives the 2025 Kerr Award for Excellence in Research

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (April 2025) — David Carlson is the recipient of the 2025 Julie B. Kerr Award for Excellence in Research. The award is named in honor of a former researcher in IDA's Center for Communications Research in La Jolla, California. It is given to an employee who has demonstrated research excellence and exceptional achievement in the IDA research community.

Dave has been on the research staff of the IDA Center for Computing Sciences since 1986. His greatest contributions have underpinned one particular cryptanalytic field. He is a prolific contributor to the scientific literature of this field, having more than 60 internal research publications along with numerous internal conference papers.

Beyond producing papers and theory, Dave is an implementer. He has spent the majority of his career embedded in the sponsor space, transitioning his research immediately into operational gains in the production environment. He is directly responsible for millions of operational successes in his area, and his contributions to the theory and practice are so fundamental that their indirect impact can be observed in nearly all of the operational successes in the field.

Beyond his personal achievements, Dave has excelled as a mentor, leader and colleague in the technical community. He formally led concentrated research efforts. Dave is also noted for implementing into production the best ideas. His intent is always to further the mission, regardless of the source of the innovation, and he is a model for excellence in research, mission impact and sponsor engagement.

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Institute for Defense Analyses

Herman Phillips | (703) 845-2371 | hphillip@ida.org | ida.org

