Saturday, May 27 2006

Dean Briant, Professor Dobbins, Distinguished Guests, Distinguished Colleagues, Distinguished Graduates, Family and Friends **This is great!**

This is a **tremendous** honor indeed and I would like to thank Brown Engineering (Division of Engineering) for making it possible. And thank the distinguished members of the selection committee for considering my accomplishments worth this honor.

This is a **true milestone** in one's career and makes one look back, take stock. Certainly I did not accomplish this alone! There are many-many people who have helped and influenced me along the way, starting with my teachers and my students, and I would like to **thank them all**.

It is **wonderful to be back** at Brown especially under such circumstances.

I will be brief. On the other hand Why Should I?! This is a once in a lifetime opportunity!

Many things have changed since the time I first arrived on campus soo many years ago! But **other things have not changed at all**. For instance, my friends look the same they have not changed! My teachers, Bill Wolovich for example has not changed a bit! When I was here Buddy Cianci was the mayor and from what I heard he is away right now but he will be back! Count on it!

Nothing changes but at the same time everything changes.

I look around me and I see all these **new graduates**. There are big changes in your lives. You should look forward to **new broader horizons, new vistas, new triumphs but also new battles**. There will be some setbacks and I wish you that these setbacks be small and temporary, that you will learn from them and you will become stronger, wiser more mature **ready to dazzle the world with your wonderful achievements**.

Engineering is great! A governor of Ohio was asked once why he stated that he wished he were an Engineer. He said that because engineers are trained to solve problems while as a lawyer he was only trained to win cases!

I look around and I see intelligence, dedication, determination and lots, lots of hard work. **I congratulate you and wish you luck! Go out and bring back glory** to Brown Engineering! **Let's give them all a big hand!**

Talking about changes, it was rather a dramatic change for me when I first came to Brown. I had come to the US with a Fulbright scholarship and I spent 1 month that summer before Brown in Texas, UT Austin-orientation. No, no the shock was not from Texas to Rhode Island, but from Greece to the US. The environment was quite different but very-very interesting and good.

Saturday, May 27 2006

How come I came to Brown? I recall when Fulbright sent me the names of the US schools that had accepted me, I took the list to one of my Greek Professors at the NTUA who looked at it and said: **There is no question where you should go for a PhD in control systems. You should go to Brown not only because it is a great school but because Bill Wolovich is there.** And Bill became my Masters and PhD advisor. What luck and what a wonderfully correct decision! Of course I did not know it at the time!!!

Let me tell you about my **research**. My area is automatic control and automation. It is related to Computers, CommNetworks, InfoTechnology. I use mathematics to describe systems I want to control, and then I design decision making systems to do exactly that. I use math a lot. Where do you find such control systems? In short, everywhere.
In your car, ABS brakes, traction control, cruise control, stabilizing systems, fuel injection, emission control. Also stabilizing the image in your hand held cam recorder. Also automatic pilots in airplanes. In ships-cruise ships. In factories. In refineries. Feedback control is everywhere, but it is hidden-inside computers.

After my PhD I taught at Brown for a year (Teaching & Research Fellow). I taught **Engr 255-Linear Systems and Engr 94A –An introduction to Systems Science. OR (Operations Research) and Linear Programming to non-Engr majors**-French. Then I went to Rice for a year-back to Texas - and then to Imperial College in London before I went to Notre Dame.

Brown's interdisciplinary approach to the curriculum, especially in science and engineering **shaped my interests in many positive ways and had a lasting influence**. After Linear Systems I got interested in Intelligent Autonomous Control Systems that led me to the study on Discrete Event Dynamical Systems, and Hybrid Systems. And more recently to Networked Embedded sensing and Control Systems. Control and feedback has been the connecting tissue here.

Teaching and research keep me busy enough (I currently supervise 8 graduate students). However I also consider a faculty member's obligation to participate in **committees that deal with issues of importance to the students and faculty and the University as a whole**. These are in addition to my participation in professional organizations. For example, I was fortunate to have served as President of the IEEE Control Systems Society.(13000 members in 85 countries)

While studying Controls at Brown, I made some very good friends. **Made friendships that have withstood the test of time!** For instance, Mary Tsangarakis, a Brown Engineer herself (her husband Christopher, also a Brown graduate) a dear friend who was always there to help with her advice hospitality and friendship. I also liked the campus atmosphere where you meet very interesting people from different disciplines, not only Engineering but Philosophy, even **Slavic Languages and Literatures, Russian poetry for crying out loud!** This is where I met my wife Melinda sitting next to Lily our daughter-Lily is a high school junior.

Saturday, May 27 2006

I would like to dedicate this to all the people who influenced my choices in life and my view of life, my teachers, my students my friends and mostly my family here and in Greece. Thank you all!