

TechNews

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Undesirable things TO-DO before Germany 2011

By Shefali Umrania
TECHNEWS WRITER

I received the DAAD RISE scholarship to intern as an undergraduate researcher at the Max Planck Institute in Germany for the summer of 2011. I plan to write of my travels and travails here and maintain it for the benefit of capturing every special and exotic moment that I come by. I know this is going to be THE Eurotrip of my life and I don't want to leave any stone unturned to make it happen!

It was quite an eventful moment when I learnt of my acceptance. March 1, one of my friends from school plastered it all over her Facebook that she got the scholarship and that she was going. Since then, I checked the DAAD RISE page every single day and my e-mail multiple times a day for updates. DAAD said they would also e-mail rejection letters by mid-March, so after March 10 my anticipation shifted from expecting acceptance letters to quite the contrary. Then, by March 15, I forgot everything. All I did was sleep and catch up on all the movies that I'd been waiting to watch since the beginning of the semester. March 17, 2011, my brother's birthday. The night before, I remember telling my brother how awesome it would be if I get my acceptance letter the next day on his birthday and what he replied literally translated to "InshAllah" in Arabic. I again slept into oblivion. The next morning I woke up with no DAAD on my head to bother me. I pulled out my phone to check my e-mail while still in bed and read "congratulations" in the subject line of one of the e-mails. I feared cruel deception and hence went on to read the whole e-mail and, although I couldn't comprehend a single word at first, the second reading confirmed that I was accepted. I jumped out of bed like a ninja who had been alerted of his enemy or like a firefighter

whose alarm had just gone off. A shout of joy and many jumps and crazy dances were halted by the piercing pain of an ankle twist. I smiled and took up my phone again, checked the time in India and called my family back home. They were going out for dinner. Suddenly, I didn't want to go to Germany. Suddenly, all I wanted was to go back home just so I could accompany my family to dinner. One e-mail changed it all. Yes, I'm happy I'm going. But, I'm equally sad that I won't be going home for a long time now...My project is a bioinformatics one. One of the leading research fields in the scientific world; saying no to a fully funded scholarship opportunity to research in Germany would be something my parents would definitely revolt against. So yeah, summer in Germany it was.

One day, I was getting bored in class and was going through some high school pictures. I spotted my present high school principal in one of the pictures and all the memories of my archenemy—the subject History—came back. The Parliament, the Partition of India, the World Wars... and then Germany. Realization hit me that I should probably brush up on what exactly happened in Germany during the World Wars and how I should be politically correct with my words whilst there. Trust me, reading up on the Versailles Treaty on Wikipedia after so many years is no fun. This placed #1 in the award for undesirable things to-do for Germany.

The second position was taken by an hour-long "hold" waiting for a British Airways (BA) customer care representative to respond to my complaint. Due to some bizarre reason, while booking my flight online, BA had a problem in their server and obviously wanted me to call them to fix things. Apparently, although my funds from Citibank were debited, they never reached BA. I was forced to believe for an entire day that one grand USD were stuck in limbo,

possibly somewhere in Web 2.0 from where no one will be able to extract them. Haha, Citibank customer care is outsourced and the Citibank rep. was speaking to me from a call center in Mumbai. We happened to share an awkward moment where both of us were amused with the fact that we were somehow related to each other through our common interest in the city of Mumbai. Rest assured, things fell into place when I received a confirmation for my e-ticket to Stuttgart!

#3 goes to me getting a "fake" legit ISIC card for my trip to Europe. Apparently, the possession of an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) gives you access to many discounts and sales all throughout Europe. With the pure Indian "love-for-discounts" blood in me, I, of course, took the first trip between classes to go downtown and get it made. I was astounded to see the lady cut the ISIC trademarked paper and paste it on a thick card. She then wrote my name on it and stuck a hologram sticker on top of my name and an empty space where my picture would otherwise be placed. As she handed that over to me, I looked around for a photo booth. Of course, there was none! Apparently, I was supposed to paste any of my favorite passport size pictures below the hologram sticker myself. The audacity of it all, when I was freaking charged \$22 for it, was beyond me. I just stared at her for a whole minute that she finally agreed, "Yeah, I know it almost looks like I made you a fake ID, but it's the real thing. Don't worry." Gah?! I was almost sure that someone in Europe would look at the ID and accuse it of being fake. I should probably paste my receipt on the back of the ID so I have proof of its authenticity everywhere I go.

Two weeks to summer. Four weeks to Germany. Life's going on. Danke. Tschüss und einen schönen tag!

IIT remembers Robert W. Galvin

By Ryan Hynes
OPINION EDITOR

As the leaves change, and the chill winds of fall signify the passing of summer, IIT too must recognize the passing of one of its own. Robert W. Galvin was many things to many people, and to try to summarize that in a few words would a disservice to him and his memory. Instead, I will try to explain what Mr. Galvin was to this university and the surrounding community.

Bob Galvin became a trustee of IIT in 1953 and was a faithful servant of the university until his passing this past Tuesday, October 11. Galvin served as chairman of the Board of Trustees from 1979 to 1990, playing a fundamental role in the expansion of IIT and serving as a driving force behind the transformation of IIT and the shaping of its future.

Galvin also chaired the National Commission, a panel dedicated to improving IIT, both fiscally and academically, and providing a solid foundation for future success. After the National Commission published its findings in 1994, Galvin donated \$60 million to the University.

Galvin received an honorary doctorate from IIT 1990; the Henry Heald Award, the university's highest honor, in 1994; and was inducted into the IIT Hall of Fame in 2002. In 2004, Galvin was elected to the university Board of Regents, on which he served until his passing.

For current students, it may be hard to put Mr. Galvin's contributions in perspective, due to the fact that what Bob did for this school has totally transformed the IIT community.

State Street Village, the MTCC, IPROs, the Galvin Center for Electricity Innovation, the Camras Scholars Program, all of these things bear Galvin's indelible mark and would not have been possible without his vision and commitment. Many of us would be hard pressed to reconcile the IIT of 20 years past with what it has become today.

Robert Galvin not only had a vision for the future of IIT, he had the drive, the passion, and the strength to make the potential that he saw in IIT into our reality.

Take a look around this week: at the black wall in the MTCC that bears his name and the names of others who shared his passion for IIT; at the library that bears his father's name, in recognition of the Galvin family's commitment to IIT; at the Galvin-Pritzker Grove. Look around this campus and try to imagine it without his contributions.

As we mourn the loss of Robert W. Galvin, and we remember his many accomplishments, accolades, and contributions to IIT, let us not forget the spirit in which we knew him.

As an innovator, a pioneer, and a leader in all ventures, both business and philanthropic, and as someone who saw in IIT

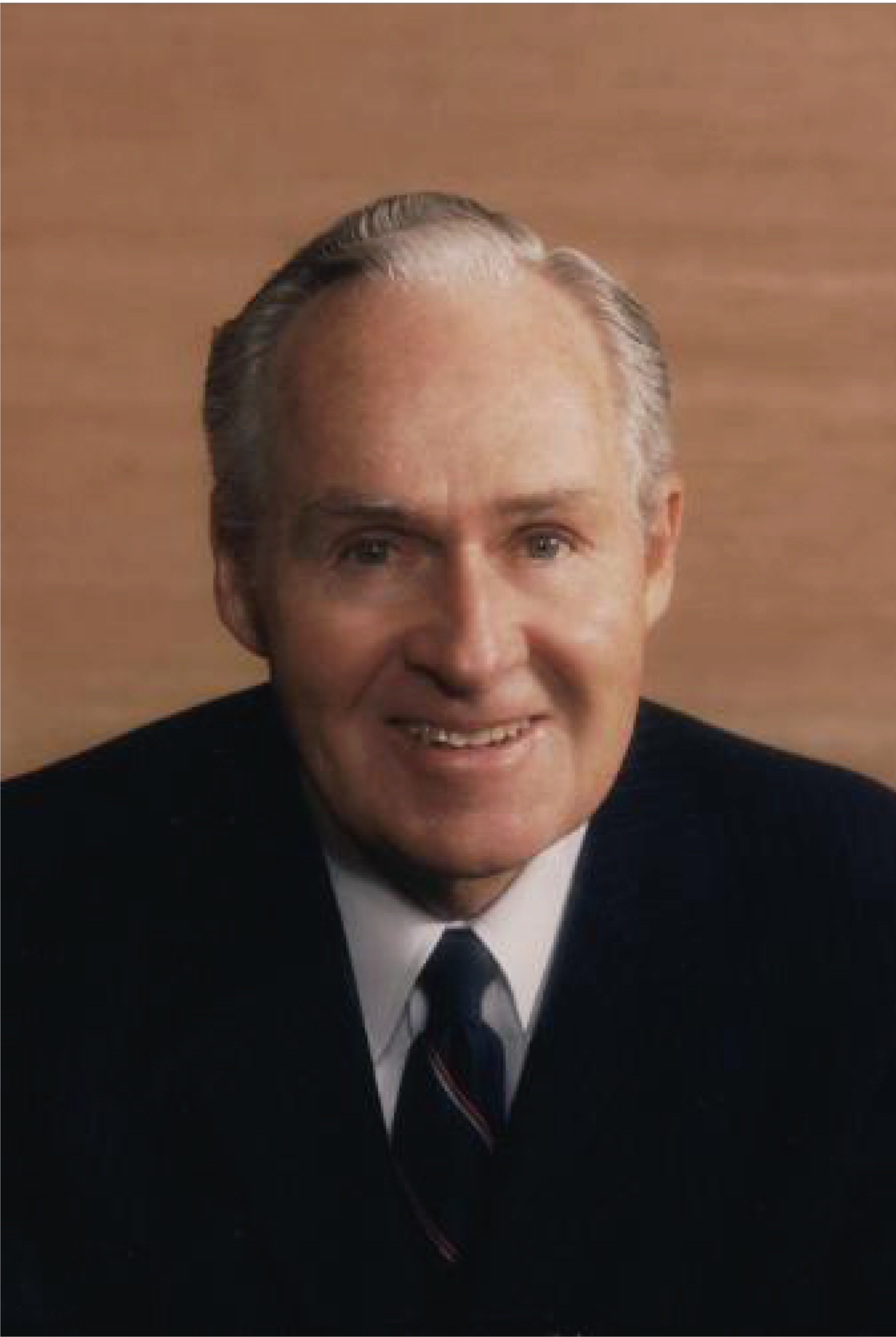


Photo courtesy of PRNewswire

great potential.

Let us remember him through our actions and let his passion for IIT inspire us to be the best students, the best faculty, the best staff, and the best people that we can be; for that is truly the greatest way to honor his memory, and ensure that his impact is felt for years to come.