



The Royal Academy
of Engineering

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3 Carlton House Terrace
London SW1Y 5DG

Tel +44 (0) 20 7766 0600
Fax +44 (0) 20 7930 1549
www.raeng.org.uk

Direct tel +44 (0) 20 7766 0655
ed.holmes@raeng.org.uk

News release

5 December 2011

World's 'leading light' on maritime safety honoured for career's work

A British engineer whose name is “synonymous” across the world with developments in ship safety, has been recognised by the Royal Academy of Engineering for his achievements spanning more than 30 years.

Dracos Vassalos, Professor of Maritime Safety at the University of Strathclyde and Director of the Ship Stability Research Centre (SSRC), has won the 2011 Sustained Achievement Award for his career-long achievements and their profound impact on his discipline.

The 60-year-old who lives in Pollokshields in Glasgow, has spent 32 years researching and developing ship stability and safety, through initiatives such as the SSRC, a Centre of Excellence for ship stability and safety research, which he set up in 1996 and Design for Safety, which brought together industry and academic in an unprecedented effort to help catalyse continuous safety improvement in the maritime industry.

Nominating Professor Vassalos for the award, his colleague Professor Atilla Incecik said: “SSRC is the leading light on maritime safety while Design for Safety is realising step changes in ship design and operation with ambitious targets for zero tolerance in human life loss and environmental impact. All this achieved in a very traditional, inertia-fraught, industry. “Professor Vassalos’ sustained achievements over the last 32 years have completely revolutionised maritime safety, the full impact of which is still being delivered.”

International maritime consultant Tom Allan added: “Dracos’ name is synonymous with the development, improvement and ground-breaking work on the survivability of ships, and in particular passenger ships. I would suggest that today, most, if not all would not refer to him and his knowledge in this field.”

During his career, Professor Vassalos has overseen over 100 major research contracts to the value of more than £25m and has supervised 41 PhD students. He has also served as a Government advisor and lectured around the world on maritime safety.

Professor Vassalos received his Sustained Achievement Award from the Academy’s Senior Vice President, Professor Sir William Wakeham on December 1.

Collecting his antiqued silver medal, he said: “It is a humbling experience and a signal honour receiving this award from the premier engineering institution, that is the Royal Academy of Engineering. I am deeply grateful to all who have considered me worthy of this award and indebted to all my colleagues and students for their support all these years; above all to my family for their continuing encouragement and love. Thank you.”

For more information contact Ed Holmes at ed.holmes@raeng.org.uk or on 0207 766 0655.

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Notes for Editors

The President’s Medal

The Royal Academy of Engineering President’s Medal was first awarded in 1987 to Air Marshal Sir Richard Wakeford KCB LVO OBE AFC. It is awarded biennially to an organisation or individual who has contributed significantly to the Academy’s aims and work through ‘initiative in promoting excellence in engineering’. Previous winners include Sir Alan Rudge and Jonathan Ive.

The Royal Academy of Engineering

Founded in 1976, The Royal Academy of Engineering promotes the engineering and technological welfare of the country. Our fellowship – comprising the UK’s most eminent engineers – provides the leadership and expertise for our activities, which focus on the relationships between engineering, technology, and the quality of life. As a national academy, we provide independent and impartial advice to Government; work to secure the next generation of engineers; and provide a voice for Britain’s engineering community.

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