

# Awards

## IEEE VGTC Virtual Reality Career Award 2006

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The 2006 Virtual Reality Career Award goes to Larry F. Hodges, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA in recognition of seminal contributions to clinical virtual reality. He has pioneered both the development and evaluation of virtual environments for use in the treatment of various anxiety disorders, including fear of heights, fear of public speaking, fear of flying, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The IEEE VGTC is pleased to award Larry F. Hodges the 2006 Virtual Reality Career Award.



**Larry F. Hodges**

University of North Carolina at  
Charlotte

IEEE VGTC Virtual Reality Career  
Award Recipient 2006

### BIOGRAPHY

Larry Hodges joined the computer science faculty at Georgia Tech after receiving his Ph.D. in Computer Engineering from North Carolina State University in 1988. His dissertation was in the area of stereoscopic computer graphics. At Georgia Tech he founded the Virtual Environments Group which focused on the rapidly emerging research area of Virtual Reality.

In 1993 he organized a multidisciplinary team of clinicians and computer scientists who began to investigate the use of VR for exposure therapy of phobias. This work resulted in the 1995 publication of Effectiveness of computer-generated (virtual reality) graded exposure in the treatment of acrophobia in the American Journal of Psychiatry. This paper was the first published report of a controlled study on the use of VR for psychotherapy in the psychiatric literature and received wide media attention, including an announcement of the paper's results on CBS Evening News the day the journal article was released and follow-up stories by Scientific American Frontiers, CNN, Dateline NBC, Good Morning America, US News & World Report, MIT Technology Review, Discover, and the New York Times.

Since that first study he has continued to expand the development of what has become known as VR Therapy or Virtual Therapy with two patents and over 25 journal publications in the clinical psychology and psychiatry literature on various clinical applications of VR, including treatment of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Fear of Flying, Social Phobias, and Balance Disorders.

In 1996 he, with research colleague Barbara Rothbaum of Emory University, founded Virtually Better, Inc. a company that specializes in creation, testing, and sales of virtual environments for clinical applications in psychiatry, psychology, and addiction. Virtually Better Therapy systems are currently in use by clinicians in many locations across the US and in nine other countries.

In addition to his research work in Clinical Applications of VR, Dr. Hodges has also maintained an active research agenda in numerous other areas of Virtual Reality, Visualization, and 3D User Interface Design with over

150 published papers. He currently serves on the Steering Committee of the IEEE VR Conference and on the Editorial Board of IEEE Transactions on Visualization & Computer Graphics. He has graduated a number of M.S and Ph.D. students who have gone on to research and academic positions in VR and related areas at places such as Georgia Tech, the University of Southern California, Texas A&M University, Virginia Tech, North Carolina State University, UNC Charlotte, Fraunhofer, Disney, and Sarnoff Corp.

Dr. Hodges currently serves as Professor and Chair of the Department of Computer Science at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

### AWARD INFORMATION

The IEEE VGTC Virtual Reality Career Award was established in 2005. It is given every year to an individual to honor that person's lifetime contribution to virtual & augmented reality. VGTC members may nominate individuals for the Virtual Reality Career Award by contacting the 2007 awards chair for virtual reality, Larry F. Hodges, at [vgtc-vr-awards@computer.org](mailto:vgtc-vr-awards@computer.org).