

PHOTO / DONNA COVENEY  
Mary Boyce, the newly appointed head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering



# Boyce to head Department of Mechanical Engineering

Mary Boyce, the Gail E. Kendall Professor of Mechanical Engineering, has been named the next head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering effective July 1, School of Engineering Dean Subra Suresh announced last week.

Boyce, who received her bachelor's degree from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and her master's and doctoral degrees from MIT, is renowned for her research in the mechanics of polymers, networks and soft tissues and for her dedication to engineering education. The impact of her research has been recognized through the many awards she has received, which include election as a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the American Academy of Mechanics.

For her innovation in education she was named a MacVicar fellow and received the Joseph H. Keenan Award for Innovation in Undergraduate Education. She has served MIT and her professional field in numerous capacities, including chair of the Executive Committee for Applied Mechanics at ASME, membership on the U.S. National Committee on Theoretical and Applied Mechanics and the editorial board of the Journal of the Mechanics and Physics

of Solids.

Although a woman has served as associate department head in the Department of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering, Boyce will be the first woman department head in MIT's School of Engineering.

"I am confident we will all benefit from her energy, her insight and her dedication to engineering education and the engineering profession," Suresh said.

The dean thanked the faculty advisory committee, chaired by Roger Kamm, Germeshausen Professor of Mechanical and Biological Engineering. Other members of the panel included professors Gang Chen, Martin Culpepper, Carol Livermore, Tony Patera, Nick Patrikalakis, Ian Waitz and Kamal Youcef-Toumi.

Suresh also thanked Rohan Abeyaratne, Quentin Berg (1937) Professor in Mechanical Engineering, for his "extraordinary and dedicated service" as head of mechanical engineering since 2001, and as associate head, a position he held for four years before becoming department head.

"I hope and expect to have an opportunity in the near future to thank Rohan more formally and to elaborate on his contributions," Suresh said. "I look forward to a continued and close collaboration with him."

## Two named associate directors at MIT Media Lab

Two long-term, prominent researchers at the MIT Media Lab, Hiroshi Ishii and Andrew Lippman, have been named associate directors at the lab, Director Frank Moss announced this week.

In announcing the appointments, Moss emphasized the key roles they will play in helping to realize new directions for the lab. "As the Media Lab explores creative ways for technology to have a lasting impact on people and society, we will also be looking for deeper collaboration with industry, to bring important innovations to the real world," Moss said.

Ishii is best known for creating the field of Tangible User Interfaces to realize seamless connections between humans, digital information and the physical world. A faculty member at the Media Lab since 1995, Ishii holds the Muriel R. Cooper Professorship of Media Arts and Sciences, heads the Tangible Media research group and co-directs the Things That Think

(TTT) consortium. His work focuses on inventing the future of digitally augmented objects and environments.

Before coming to the Media Lab, Ishii spent the majority of his career at NTT (Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation), where his research team pioneered video-mediated remote collaboration media that created shared workspaces across distances.

A founding member of the Media Lab, Lippman has a more than 30-year history at MIT. He established and has directed the Digital Life consortium, which focuses on the confluence of technical invention and human understanding to create a networked world where communication becomes fully embedded in our daily lives. Lippman heads the lab's Viral Communications research group, which focuses on constructing infrastructure-free, scalable, collaborative systems that permit uncontrolled growth and use minimal power systems that move intelligence "from the trunk to the leaves." He also co-directs MIT's interdisciplinary Communications Futures program. While on sabbatical for the 2007-2008 academic year, Lippman is a visiting fellow at Nortel, one of the lab's corporate sponsors. He will assume his new duties upon his return to the lab in September.



LEFT: Hiroshi Ishii  
RIGHT: Andrew Lippman

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MEDIA LAB

### OBITUARIES

#### Theresa M. Roche, veteran of MIT Facilities

Theresa M. Roche, of Middleboro, Mass., an MIT Facilities employee for 15 years, died of complications from cancer on Monday, April 21, at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Roche, who retired from MIT in 2007, worked the day shift in custodial services. Among the buildings she serviced was Building 68, where she was loved by members of the Department of Biology—who also held a farewell party for her upon her retirement. She would reach out to everyone with her laughter, smile and caring ways. Even during her illness, Roche maintained an upbeat and positive attitude and was an inspiration to all who knew her.

During her time with MIT Facilities, Theresa received several customer-service awards and was honored in 2006 with an Infinite Mile Award.

She was a devoted wife to her husband, Joe; mother to her two daughters, Donna and Carol; and grandmother to her seven grandchildren. She enjoyed traveling and shopping and keeping in touch with all of her friends. She will be sadly missed by all those who knew her. Donations in memory of Mrs. Roche may be made to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, P.O. Box 55584, Boston, MA 02205-5584.



Theresa Roche

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### Unraveling the heparin mystery

Team of researchers, led by MIT Professor Ram Sas, explain how tainted heparin got past safety checks

An international team of researchers led by MIT has explained how contaminated batches of the blood-thinner heparin were able to slip past rigorous safety screens and kill dozens of patients recently in the United States and Germany.

The team, led by MIT Professor Ram Sas, identified the chemical structure of the contaminant, known as oversulfated chondroitin sulfate (OSCS). The researchers present their findings and offer new approaches to detecting the contaminant in a report that appeared last week in the online edition of Nature Biotechnology.

Another team led by Sasikumar has shown exactly how

OSCS can kill—specifically by setting off a chain of events that leads to the biological effects of the contaminant. The biological effects of the contaminant were first reported in a report in the Journal of Medicine.

"Sophisticated analytical techniques and a report by the scientific community are needed to understand the scientific process improvements in screening practice to monitor heparin, thus ensuring patient safety," said Sas, senior author of the paper, the United States.

### Mapping Earth's water cycle

Entekhabi to lead science team for NASA satellite mission

over land. It is the variable that links these three cycles through its control on evaporation and plant transpiration. Global monitoring of this variable will allow a new perspective on the water cycle work and very

Denise Brash  
Civil and Environmental Engineering

Professor Dana Entekhabi will lead the science team for the NASA Soil Moisture Active Passive (SMAP) satellite mission, scheduled to launch in December 2012. A 6-meter wide-swath satellite, the SMAP will provide global maps of soil moisture.

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