2008 Award Recipient

Samuel Pullara III '93

Sam Pullara, for most people, a love of Java means they spend a good portion of their day in a caffeine coma. But for you, Java is the programming language you rant about and simultaneously worship. Perhaps we should call it a passion, which you cultivated by contributing to open-source projects and volunteering with the Java Community Process. Your blog, javarants.com, is probably more love letter than pithy banter.

On the surface, your passion for Stephen King, Tom Clancy and Dean Koontz novels suggests that you are a man of mystery. But, as a physicist, you are a man of logic and innovation.

Now, as vice president of technology strategy at Yahoo!, you are part of a leading global Internet firm, which is particularly fitting as WPI prides itself in exposing its students to the global perspective of problem solving. Previously, you were vice president of platform at Yahoo!, where you focused primarily on grid computing, virtualization, reliable data systems, and implementing Yahoo’s open-platform strategy.

Innovation, problem solving, and entrepreneurship—all WPI hallmarks.

It only made sense that you would found your own software company, Gauntlet Systems, which you sold to Borland Corp. in 2006 and became that company’s chief architect. Gauntlet’s technology was integrated into Borland’s Lifecycle Quality Management Products, a testament to the strength of your software platform.

Your early career included logical choices, literally. After earning your master of science degree in physics from Northwestern University, you did consulting work at TransUnion and Searle Corp. At BEA Systems, you were part of the Technology Advancement Group, designing and implementing key features in all generations of the company’s flagship WebLogic product. In 1996, you were the first server engineer hired at WebLogic, Inc.; WebLogic was acquired by BEA in 1998.

Then it was off to Accel Venture Partner, where your appetite for entrepreneurship and all-things-technical catapulted you to entrepreneur-in-residence at the firm. It was while you were a venture consultant at Accel that you founded Gauntlet.

Sam Pullara, self-described “technical know-it-all and entrepreneur,” for your remarkable career in technology, WPI is proud to honor you with the Ichabod Washburn Young Alumni Award for Professional Achievement.