

Kenneth R. Moscatti (1946–2021)



Illustration by David Moscatti

Kenneth Moscatti, longtime senior illustrator for the *Johns Hopkins APL Technical Digest*, died March 15, 2021, at the age of 74, from complications following open-heart surgery. Ken made major contributions to APL's technical illustrations, large environmental displays, and publications, particularly the *Technical Digest*. He was an Air Force veteran, an exceedingly talented designer and illustrator, and a cherished friend to all who knew him both personally and professionally. He is sorely missed by his wife of 44 years, Tiana; son David and fiancée

Devon of Georgia; son Paul and wife Jessica of Maryland; extended family and many lifelong friends; and APL colleagues, who had become like family.

Ken was born November 8, 1946, in Washington, DC. Interested in art and design from an early age, he designed his class ring at Crossland High School. After graduating in 1966, he enlisted in the United States Air Force and served in the Vietnam War, for which he received several medals, including a Purple Heart. As an illustrator for the Air Force, he prepared charts, graphs,

and briefing materials, including flip charts and technical illustrations, until his honorable discharge in 1970. Ken then continued his education at the University of Colorado, where he earned an associate's degree in fine arts. While in Colorado, he was able to enjoy some of his other passions, filling his spare time with hunting, fishing, and camping trips.

After working for two years as a staff artist designing ads for the *Denver Post*, he found his way back to Maryland in 1976 and took a position as an assistant production manager for Sentinel Newspapers, working on seven papers covering Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. In this role, Ken designed ads, contributed to various production tasks, and supervised a team of nine other artists. During this same time, he worked security at the Rosecroft Raceway in Fort Washington, Maryland, where he met his future wife, Tiana. They married on September 30, 1977.

From 1981 to 1985, Ken was the illustration group leader at the Beltsville, Maryland, offices of Harris Corporation, a defense contractor that provided technology and IT products, including wireless equipment, tactical radios, night vision apparatus, antennas, and electronic systems, to government, defense, and commercial customers. In addition to illustrating satellite communication equipment for military standard (MIL-STD or MIL-SPEC) technical manuals, he supervised three government contracts and a team of 12 illustrators and graphic specialists, planning the team's tasks and milestones and hiring and training new illustrators. Several of these people eventually worked together again at APL, including William (Bill) Critchfield, Diane Dorsey, Paul Gush, Derek Johnson, and Barbara Williamson. It was during this time that Ken honed his artistic calling: combining his love of art with his deep interest in science. It was also during this time that Ken and Tiana welcomed the arrival of their first son, David, born in 1983.

Ken joined APL as a contractor in 1985 and as a full-time staff member in 1986, the same year his second son, Paul, was born. Over his 35-year career at the Lab, Ken worked with scientists, engineers, and others involved in research and development to create technical illustrations, logos, displays, and even fine art. His work on large displays included wall art for the Central Spark facilities in Buildings 17 and 21, the Space Exploration Sector history wall in Building 200, and a New Horizons display in Building 1. He also collaborated on a series of original paintings honoring the Lab's 50th anniversary.

In 1994, Ken began applying his artistry to the *Technical Digest*, creating figures and illustrations of complex scenarios, as well as the journal's covers. When then editor-in-chief Kishin Moorjani set out to enhance the publication's visual appeal and propel it into the digital age, Ken provided fresh ideas for cover designs. He moved seamlessly from drawing illustrations by hand to creating them on screen in software such as Adobe

Photoshop and Illustrator. When the *Digest* underwent a complete design overhaul in 1995, Ken's bold, glossy wraparound covers became a defining feature of the publication. Since that time, he illustrated most of the covers, and fellow artists and readers alike marveled at his signature style.

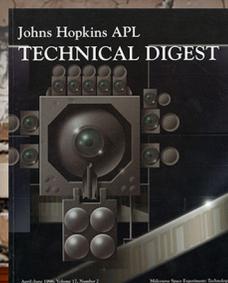
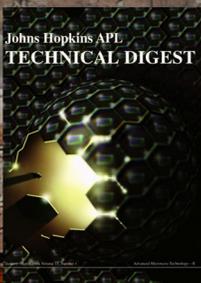
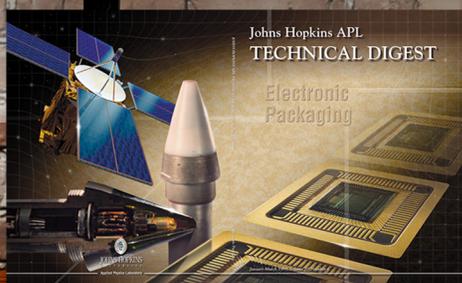
Ken's work at APL earned many awards and accolades from both Lab leadership and peer organizations. In 1990, then director Carl Bostrom presented Ken with a letter of commendation for his special contributions to the success of the Steven Muller Center for Advanced Technology building dedication ceremony on March 11. In the letter, Dr. Bostrom noted that the "personal concern for the overall design of the program in honor of Dr. Muller and the wonderful drawing Ken did helped make this affair a very impressive occasion." Dr. Muller also sent Ken a letter expressing his personal appreciation. In 2007, in recognition and appreciation of his efforts in support of the successful National Information Assurance Engagement Center demonstration, Ken received a letter of commendation from Ralph Semmel, who was at the time head of the Applied Information Sciences Department and is now APL director. Ken also received a letter from then director Richard Roca thanking him for his contributions to the demonstration.

His striking cover designs for the *Technical Digest* earned numerous honors from local, national, and international organizations. Some of those honors include awards from Graphic Design USA, the International Academy of the Visual Arts, MarCom (International Competition for Marketing and Communication Professionals), the National Association of Government Communicators, Printing & Graphics Association MidAtlantic, the Printing Industry of Maryland Association, the Society for Technical Communication, and the Society of Technical Writers and Publishers.

Ken was a textbook renaissance man. In addition to art, he loved gardening, hunting, fishing, playing guitar and ukulele, and reading as many science fiction books as he could get his hands on. He was a true craftsman and a wonderful cook. One year he impressed his APL teammates at an annual holiday luncheon with a traditional meal of perfectly cooked prime rib and all the trimmings. He had the unique ability to make everyone he met instantly feel like they'd been his friend forever. He was capable of endless conversation and always ready with sage advice. Ken served as a mentor and friend to his APL colleagues, who will miss his stories and guidance, as well as his comforting laugh and endearing nicknames.

Salvador Dalí said, "A true artist is not one who is inspired, but one who inspires others." With his art and with his charm, Ken Moscati inspired all who were fortunate enough to have known him.

Digest staff in collaboration with the Moscati family



Highlights from Ken's Career