

SIGMOD Edgar F. Codd Innovations Award
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I am deeply honored to receive the Codd Award. I would like to take the opportunity to say a few words about Ted Codd, who was my mentor and my hero. Ted took me under his wing when I first arrived at the IBM San Jose Research Lab. His warm support meant the world to me. Years later, I named my youngest son Teddy because of all the strong positive connotations the name Ted meant to me.

The relational model of databases is one of the great success stories of computer science. Many people do not realize what an ad hoc mess databases were like before Ted Codd dramatically changed the playing field with his invention of the relational model.

Ted did everything necessary to make the relational model succeed. First, he laid such a solid mathematical foundation for it that theorists like me could have a field day deriving results about it, practitioners could obtain clean and efficient implementations of it, and users could understand it intuitively and use it effectively.

The elegant framework Ted laid out was, in mathematical terminology, necessary but not sufficient for the success of the relational model. Beautiful and brilliant ideas do not automatically succeed. There was a great deal of opposition to the relational model by entrenched interests, both inside and outside of IBM. In addition to the deep understanding of the issues and the intellectual power that led him to derive the relational model, Ted needed to call on some of his other strengths to succeed in the next phase of the battle. Ted needed the intense inner resolve to aggressively and effectively fight for his technical beliefs. He needed the clarity of vision and the eloquence to make a compelling case against objection after objection. And he needed the courage to stand up to strong opponents, including his own management in IBM.

A lesser man could not have succeeded. There's an old Yiddish word, mensch, which literally means "man" or "human being". It refers to a

person with very admirable characteristics. Ted, in every sense of the word, was truly a mensch.