Alan Paller's Legacy Recognized with Cyber Security Hall of Fame Induction
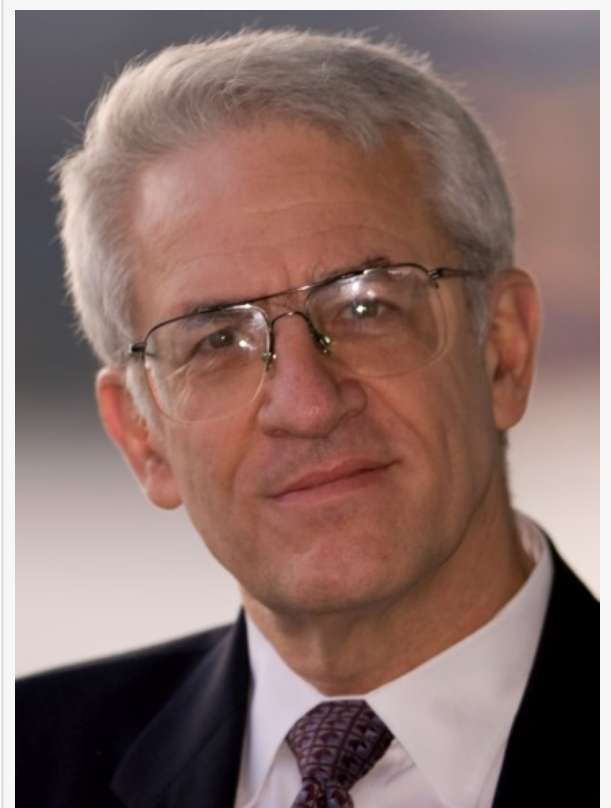
SANS Institute and Center for Internet Security (CIS) Celebrate Visionary Who Transformed Global Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development

HANOVER, MD, UNITED STATES, December 18, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a stirring ceremony that brought together global cybersecurity leaders, innovators, and veterans of the digital defense community, the late Alan Paller—founder of the SANS Institute—was posthumously inducted into the Cyber Security Hall of Fame. The December 5, 2024 event paid tribute to Paller's unparalleled legacy in shaping the cybersecurity industry along with the entire generation of practitioners committed to safeguarding our connected world that followed.

The Cyber Security Hall of Fame's mission to "Respect the Past – Protect the Future" finds true embodiment in Paller's life and work. Decades before cybersecurity became a boardroom imperative, Paller anticipated the increased urgency of digital defense. In 1989,

Alan Paller 1945-2021

Paller founded the SANS Institute with a visionary belief: that widespread, high-quality cybersecurity training would be critical to national security, economic stability, and personal privacy. Over the years, SANS has trained nearly half a million professionals, while more than 1.2 million young people and career-changers have found their path into cyber defense through Paller's pioneering programs like CyberStart and Cyber Aces.

"Alan was a man with intense focus—not on fame or accolades, but on a mission to make the world safer from cyber threats," said Ed Skoudis, President of SANS Technology Institute and a longtime colleague. "He insisted that the spotlight remain on the work, the community, and the urgent tasks at hand. Yet here we are, honoring him in exactly the way he eschewed, because he showed us what one visionary can accomplish with relentless drive and generosity of spirit."

Beyond building a global cybersecurity education ecosystem, Paller understood that enduring

impact comes from removing barriers and nurturing talent from every walk of life. Underrepresented groups, veterans, and women found opportunities through SANS scholarships that Paller championed. More than 4,500 scholarships later, these programs have proven their worth as springboards to cybersecurity careers. The SANS Technology Institute and the SANS.edu International Scholars Program further amplified Paller's influence, shaping the workforce that today's organizations rely upon to stave off sophisticated cyberattacks.

"His legacy is not just measured by the scale of what he built, but by the lives he changed," Skoudis added. "Alan ignited careers, accelerated innovation, and forged a collaborative global network of defenders. He nurtured industry legends like Rob T. Lee and Katie Nickels, while also ensuring newcomers always had a seat at the table. He multiplied impact through the Internet Storm Center and his thought leadership at the highest levels of government. Today's cybersecurity environment—where best practices are shared widely and rapid response is second nature—reflects his profound influence."

Alan Paller 1945-2021

In celebration of Paller's memory, the SANS Institute is amplifying its efforts to widen the gateway into the profession. By expanding its Cyber Academies and offering $5 million in annual training scholarships, SANS supports thousands more aspiring defenders in completing the journey Paller started them on. Additionally, the Center for Internet Security (CIS) is driving forward with the Alan Paller Laureate Program, awarding up to $250,000 annually for innovative, real-world solutions to today's most prominent cybersecurity challenges.

"Alan believed that new ideas and fresh talent were the lifeblood of cybersecurity progress," said Tony Sager, Senior Vice President and Chief Evangelist at CIS. "The Alan Paller Laureate Program invests in the kind of forward-looking projects he championed. We're not just commemorating his name; we are empowering the next wave of breakthroughs that will protect the future he worked so tirelessly to secure."

During the ceremony, Paller's daughter, Channing Paller, reflected on her father's lifelong commitment to developing the cybersecurity workforce. "He thought through and acted upon the entire lifecycle of a cyber security professional: Identify talent, create opportunities, teach them new skills they can use, ensure their employment, provide ongoing education, remove barriers, and connect people. He worked to ensure that his graduates had jobs at the end of their training. Many of our current cyber security industry leaders recognize that much of their

success is due to meeting Alan."

Paller's induction into the Cyber Security Hall of Fame enshrines his legacy as a cornerstone of the digital age, celebrating both his transformative vision and the enduring community of progress and resilience he inspired. Now counted among the industry's most revered innovators, his story endures as a powerful testament to how one individual's unwavering resolve can spark a global movement toward safer digital horizons.

"For all his accomplishments, Alan never saw the job as finished," Skoudis said. "He set a direction, built a pipeline for talent, and then urged all of us to pick up the torch. If you want to honor him—if you want to thank him—continue the work. Make security accessible. Mentor the next innovator. Protect the future he helped envision."

Join us in honoring Alan Paller's legacy by exploring the educational programs and training offered through the SANS Institute, engaging with the Center for Internet Security's innovative security benchmarks and best practices, and learning more about the Cyber Security Hall of Fame's mission to "Respect the Past – Protect the Future" and its 2024 Honorees.

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