

My Biggest Fan

by Marianne Winslett

I have been writing SIGMOD Record's *Distinguished Profiles in Databases* column since 2001. To be honest, each interview is a lot of work. I have to figure out who to interview, sweet-talk them into being interviewed, study their careers, devise interview questions tailored for them, find people who can suggest additional questions, find suitable filming locations, transport the video equipment there, film the interviews, get the interviews transcribed, help with editing the videos, and (hardest of all) edit the transcripts, which subsequently appear in these pages. To make it harder, many of the people I would like to interview live far away from me, so that I only see them once every few years at a conference. As a result, when I attend SIGMOD, VLDB, or ICDE, instead of enjoying the conference and networking with people, I am usually racing around the conference venue trying to assemble interview questions and get ready for filming.¹

If the job is so time-consuming, why do I do it? One reason is the encouraging fan mail I receive. For example:

I really enjoyed reading the interview. [...] Thanks to both of you for doing this.

I REALLY enjoyed the interview with [name omitted]. It captured him perfectly.

You are WONDERFUL!!! This is a real service to the field.

As always, the high point of SIGMOD [R]ecord for me is Marianne's interviews.

As always, a very informative and inspiring interview. Both of you come across as the wonderful and inspiring colleagues you are. A delightful conversation.

I always look forward to these interviews, and this was a joy to read. [...] A charming piece.

The SIGMOD Record interview reads very well. Thanks for doing it and thanks for making me sound coherent.

very cool. I could not bring myself to watch myself [...] but I enjoyed watching [name omitted] for a while. Video really captures him (and you). Nice! THANKS!!!

Who wouldn't feel appreciated with nice notes like these over the years – *especially if all of them were from Jim Gray?*

I haven't gotten any notes from Jim recently, but how can I stop doing interviews now? Continuing the series is my way of thanking you, Jim.

¹ ICDE 2008 was the exception to this rule. Our family's video camera was needed at home, so I had to attend ICDE 2008 without it – and so of course I missed my chance to interview our South American colleagues Claudia Bauzer Madeiros and Alberto Laender with the Cancun beach as a backdrop.