

# Dr. El-Haggan named “Innovator of the Year”

*Technology head to be honored by Maryland Daily Record*

*By Shernay Williams*

**BALTIMORE (8/30/2010)** - Dr. Ahmed El-Haggan, tech guru and Coppin’s Vice President for the Information Technology Division (ITD), has been named one of Maryland’s “Innovators of the Year” by *The Maryland Daily Record*.

The legal newspaper has cited the state’s top innovators since 2002, recognizing Maryland individuals and organizations who have “demonstrated the spirit of innovation by creating products, services or programs that benefit business, industry or communities.”



A panel of four anonymous business leaders from around the state selected Dr. El-Haggan and 24 others as winners out of a pool of 45 nominees. Dr. El-Haggan’s nomination was submitted by Coppin’s Office of University Relations.

He and the other awardees will be honored during a ceremony at the American Visionary Art Museum on Thursday, October 21, 2010, at 6 p.m.

“My first reaction was ‘wow’!” Dr. El-Haggan said enthusiastically. “It was an overwhelming feeling of happiness and joy and pride. Mainly for Coppin and my team.”

Dr. El-Haggan’s recognition continues the award-winning tradition of the ITD family. The office received the 2010 Avaya Customer Innovation Award and was named a Laureate for the fifth time in the 2010 Computerworld Honors Program.

The team was praised for the groundbreaking Enhanced 911 system launched on campus last January and made headlines this summer for a partnership with Fischer International Identity, LLC.

Dr. El-Haggan, a Giza, Egypt native, came to the States after publishing an internationally respected research project on solar energy. In 1980, his work caught the attention of New Mexico State University, whose officials offered him a full-ride to earn his doctorate.

“So, I came,” Dr. El-Haggan reminisced with a laugh.

Shortly after earning his degree in computer modeling and simulation of solar energy systems, the market for sustainable energy diminished. Realizing the need for a career change, Dr. El-

Haggan evaluated his strengths—computers—and quickly found work as a software developer and computer systems consultant for various businesses.

Despite success in those years, he couldn't shake his passion for teaching. So, after a stint as an adjunct professor, he found his way to Baltimore City Community College as the head of technology.

But the humble tech leader says he found his home on February 24, 1999, when he took the position of Director of the Office of Information Technology (OIT) at Coppin State University.

"What really brought me to Coppin was its legacy," he said. "My vision was to work with the School of Education to help the students teach better using technology; I hoped... (that) how they taught would reflect in Baltimore City, which in turn would bring stronger students in higher education. We are moving toward attaining that goal."

Under the leadership of former Coppin President Stanley F. Battle, the technology department was elevated to division status and Dr. El-Haggan was named Vice President of the Information Technology Division.

"The mission of Coppin itself is very interesting to me because it is a mission of service for the underserved," said Dr. El-Haggan. "In my opinion, this is a noble mission. What really keeps me at Coppin, and I'm sure others, is the difference we can make in the lives of people."

He is a firm believer that his selection as "Innovator of the Year" reflects the hard work of the Coppin Family as a whole.

"There is usually one person that accepts the award and shakes the hand, but it is not just that hand that makes it happen," he said. "It's not only me for sure and not only OIT. The faculty supported us, the president supported us, the provost supported us, and all of the departments. This is really an award for Coppin."

"On an arrow, you have a pointer, the arrow head" he added, "but it is the support of the whole arrow that makes it shoot forward. The arrow head by itself is nothing; it takes a whole team."