Generations of STEM:
Lynn Conway

iRobot Education

Computer Scientist & Transgender Activist

Lynn Conway is a pioneer in electronic chip design with some of her innovations still used in modern-day silicon computer chips.
In 1965 while working at IBM, Conway invented a powerful method for issuing multiple out-of-order instructions to a computer, later naming it “Dynamic Instruction Scheduling.”
It became a widely used invention, going on to be adopted by tech companies for decades with little awareness of its true inventor.

Born in the 1930s, Lynn Conway experienced gender dysphoria (GD), meaning she felt incongruity between her assigned sex at birth and her true gender. There wasn’t much publicly known about GD at the time, so Conway was forced to grow-up presenting as male. Conway eventually transitioned in the 1960’s at a time when society deemed GD to be a sickness. She took on a new name and started over in her tech career. By transitioning, she lost the identity with claim to her inventions. Later, when she shared her story, she bravely reclaimed her inventions by connecting her new identity to her past, not only gaining the recognition she deserved but inspiring future generations.

Image Source: Wikipedia / Charles Rogers Information Sources: Wikipedia, Computerhistory.org, 500queerscientists.org, University of Michigan