Editorial Contact: Noah Garrett, NGC Communications, on behalf of The Quilt: (252) 423.1277 or noah@thinkngc.com

The Quilt recognizes Pankaj Shah with national technology honor
Technology leaders throughout United States celebrate the distinguished service of IT innovator

DEARBORN, Mich. and SEATTLE, Wash. (Sept. 17, 2025) – The Quilt, a consortium of regional Research and Education (R&E) networks throughout the United States, today announced at their annual Fall Member Meeting in Michigan that Pankaj Shah, executive director of the Ohio Academic Resources Network (OARnet), is this year's recipient of the Dave Reese Distinguished Service Award.

This esteemed award is named in honor of Dave Reese (1958-2019), a founding member of The Quilt who served in several leadership roles for the organization including chairman of the board and treasurer. He set the bar high with his extraordinary sense of community, and this award recognizes others who have shown the same level of leadership, support and service to The Quilt and the national R&E networking community.

"Pankaj has been an exemplary leader in advancing networking technologies through OARnet, LEARN Texas, and beyond. His tireless dedication as a transformative leader and past board chair of The Quilt has been the bedrock of who and what we are today," said Jen Leasure, president and CEO of The Quilt. "His advocacy for research and education networks across the country and the world is genuine and rooted in boundless energy and knowledge, making him truly deserving of this honor."

Shah is currently the executive director of OARnet, the statewide research and education network in Ohio. As a division of the Ohio Department of Higher Education's Ohio Technology Consortium, OARnet serves the specialized needs of a broad range of clients including Ohio's higher education, K-12, research, health care, libraries, public broadcasting, public safety, and government communities. Under his leadership, OARnet has helped Ohio become a broadband state with an expansive network backbone for research and education services while partnering with the private sector to create economic development opportunities.

Prior to his work at OARnet, he's held positions with Marquette University, Resource One Computer System, the American Society for Nondestructive Testing (ASNT), New York City Transit Authority, and Computer City University of New York. Additionally, he also served a previous tenure at OARnet, creating and managing the Internet2 Technology Evaluation Center (ITEC-Ohio) and as a partner in the Transportable Satellite Internet System. He also previously served as executive director of the Ohio Supercomputer Center and was CEO at LEARN (Lonestar Education and Research Network) in Texas, which is also a member of The Quilt.

From the onset of his profession to his current position, he has been a driving force and champion for innovation and collaboration in information technology. Throughout his distinguished career Shah has committed himself to the IT infrastructure and broadband initiatives through work in private, public, and the research and education community, identifying trends in high-speed data transfer, videoconferencing and hybrid networking. He also has provided thought leadership, service and support to The Quilt and the national R&E networking community as a whole; being a recognized leader in the industry and IT expert frequently sought out for his technical leadership, vision and collaborative spirit.

Shah received this recognition in Michigan this week during The Quilt 2025 Fall Member Meeting. He joins an respected list of IT innovators who have received this award over the last five years including Ron Hutchins (2024), Wendy Huntoon (2023), Jim Stewart (2022), and Marla Meehl (2021).

###

About The Quilt
The Quilt is the national coalition of advanced regional networks for research and education, representing 38 networks across the country. Participants in The Quilt provide advanced network services and applications to more than 900 universities and tens of thousands of other educational institutions throughout the United States. Visit www.thequilt.net and follow on LinkedIn and X @TweetTheQuilt.

Available Photography and Images

Keywords & Tags
The Quilt, RENs, R&E networks, broadband, networking, technology, Pankaj Shah, OARNet, Dave Reese, CENIC, CIO, CTO, news