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Digits

By Don Clark

Wonder Women

There's plenty of noise about the lack of women who make it to the top of the tech game, but the organization known as **WITI** -- Women in Technology International -- is out to change that. Next week, the group will induct four new members into its "Hall of Fame." Here, in brief, are their stories.

Blind since the age of 14, Chieko Asakawa of International Business Machines Corp.'s Tokyo Research Lab has helped improve Web accessibility for the visually impaired with the IBM Home Page Reader, the Braille Editing System, the Braille Dictionary System and the IBM Braille Forum Network. Texas Instruments Inc.'s Wanda Gass will be honored as a pioneer of digital-signal processing, the basis of cellphones, digital cameras, digital hearing aids and MP3 players.

With 44 patents under her belt, Duke University's Kristina M. Johnson is internationally known for her work in optics, optoelectronic switching and display technology. She and her lab have spun off five companies, and she was nominated for a regional Emmy award for a 10-part series "Physics of Light" for middle-schoolers.

The first woman chairman of NASA's Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel, Shirley C. McCarty, longtime principal director of software engineering for Aerospace Corp., El Segundo, Calif., also will be honored for her pioneering work in the aerospace industry. Her accomplishments during the past three decades include designing secure operating systems for classified programs and computer-network architectures for military space systems.