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Abstract for an Invited Paper for the APR09 Meeting of the American Physical Society

W. K. H. Panofsky Prize Talk: The Silicon vertex detector at CDF

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I will make an historical overview of the conception and design of the device and some more details on the construction and commissioning of the detector. Then I will point out some highlights on the physics that has been done with it, in particular the role of the system in the discovery of the top quark.