

Obituaries



John W. Zwergel

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John W. Zwergel, a Life Fellow of the SMPTE, died on November 1, 1992, at the age of 71. A longtime member of the Society, Zwergel began experimenting with building radios at the age of 12. During World War II, he served the U.S. Marine Corps as a radio operator, and later, during the Korean War, he was a motion-picture cameraman.

In 1954, Zwergel collaborated in developing and maintaining the first full-service 16mm film lab in Pittsburgh. In 1960, he independently formed the city's second full-service 16mm lab.

He was elevated to Fellow status in 1981, at which time he was president of Motion Picture Film Services, Inc., a company he founded in 1968.

During his lifetime, Zwergel developed and provided hands-on workshop programs for the novice filmmaker. He was also a member of the board of directors of the Association of Cinema and Video Labs (ACVL).

Otis S. Freeman

Otis S. Freeman, a Fellow of the Society, is dead at the age of 71. A television industry pioneer, Freeman helped to create the genlock system whereby two signals could join together on the screen to provide graphics as well as a picture. He also helped to develop switching techniques that allowed clear feeds, minus commercials, to opposing teams in sporting events.

Freeman's crowning achievement was leadership in New York City's All-Industry Committee, which first identified the interference problem that the Twin Towers could bring to broadcasters and then carried out the development of the 35-story antenna tower located atop the 110-story World Trade Center to improve reception for area viewers. This work



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helped him to earn the 1984 Engineering Achievement Award from the National Association of Broadcasters, as well as the Governor's Award from the New York Chapter of the Television Arts and Sciences.

Freeman worked for Allen B. Dumont Laboratories from 1944 to 1948, where he was involved in experimental television station W2XWV, now known as WNEW-TV. He helped to take the station from its infancy to become one of America's first commercial stations. In 1948 he joined WPIX as one of five engineers on the staff, and helped to build the studio and a transmitter and was active in originating remote broadcasts from Yankee Stadium, the Polo Grounds, Madison Square Garden, and in getting the station on the air to the few homes that had television receivers at that time. In 1959, under his guidance, the now-common instant replay was born.

Freeman, who joined the SMPTE in 1983, was named to Fellow status in 1985. He was the recipient of an Emmy Award in 1983 for his pioneering television efforts. He was also a member of the Radio Club of America, IEEE, and SBE.

George Gill, a Life Member of the SMPTE, is dead. He joined the Society in 1952 as an Associate Member at which time he was employed by Kliegl Brothers as a TV lighting sales engineer. Many specialized lighting units and mounting, wiring, and control systems resulted from his work at Kliegl. A number of the developments that Gill inspired are now standard practice in the industry.

As vice-president of Century Lighting, Inc., he orchestrated many lighting projects at the 1964 New York World's Fair, as well as numerous television stations and the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. In 1967, he established Stage Equipment & Lighting Inc.

During his lifetime Gill was an active member of the SMPTE National Committee on TV Lighting; the Illuminating Engineering Society, serving on the National Committee on Lighting for TV Production; and the Florida Motion Picture and Television Association. At the time of his death, Gill was operating his own lighting consultancy firm. He designed the stage facilities and lighting of the Coconut Grove Theatre in Miami.

Edward A. Price, a Life Member of the Society, died on August 2, 1992, at the age of 71. He joined the SMPTE in 1957 as an Associate Member, while employed as a producer/camcraan at Studebaker-Packard Corp. He was also the owner and executive producer of Jack Price Enterprises, Inc.

John P. Grovers, an Active Member of the SMPTE, is dead at the age of 37. A 1977 graduate of Purdue University, Grovers joined the SMPTE in 1986, while employed as the director of the computer graphics department of Sanders & Co. At that time he also operated his own company, which manufactured a computer for industrial process control.

Erik Mogens Rondum, an Active Member of the SMPTE, is dead at the age of 75. He joined the Society in 1955, while employed by Cinerama, Inc., as an engineer. Prior to joining Cinerama, Rondum headed the development and manufacturing of photogrammetric instruments at Acro Service Corp. for 13 years.

Selig Tanner, an Active Member of the Society, died on February 23, 1992, at the age of 67. Tanner joined the SMPTE in 1985, while employed by the Madison Square Garden Network in New York City. He had previously held positions with NBC and WNHC-TV in New Haven, Conn. The recipient of an RCA Institute Certificate, which he received in 1941, Tanner earned a B.S. degree from Temple University in 1947.

Albert Lopez, an Associate Member of the Society, is dead at the age of 49. He joined the SMPTE in 1972 as a Student Member, while he was attending the School of Visual Arts in New York City. In 1975, while working as a self-employed animation artist, he transferred to Associate Member status.

Christopher Allen Rawnsley, an Associate Member of the SMPTE, is dead at the age of 29. He joined the Society in 1986, while employed as a producer at Sony of Canada Ltd. Rawnsley attended Conestoga College from 1982 to 1985, where he studied broadcasting, radio, and television arts.