

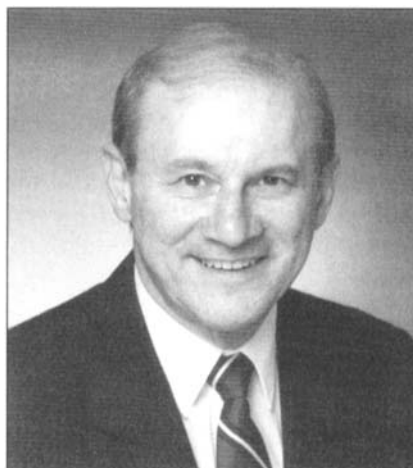
## 80 Years of Commitment to the Film Community...

By Stanley N. Baron

At a time when the focus of attention is on new mechanisms for the creation and presentation of motion images and the term "digital convergence" has become a mantra, a reflection on the Society's past helps place a proper perspective on the present. The interests of the Society and the motion-picture community as a whole are intertwined and have a shared history of successful accomplishment. SMPTE standards have allowed the motion-picture industry to address a global audience and have demonstrated the effectiveness of standards that are universal in their application.

"The modern motion picture film is a medium that knows no frontiers....Language varies, manners vary, money varies, even railway gauges vary, but the universal unit in the world today is that slender ribbon of celluloid..." observed Raymond Peck of the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau, in his speech at the SMPTE Conference during the tenth anniversary of the Society in 1926.

In the same year, Will H. Hayes, President of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, said in a public address on the internationalism of films, "...regard for one moment what I personally believe may be the greatest opportunity for good possessed by the motion picture. It may be the greatest instrument for bringing about better understanding between man and man, between group and group, between nation and nation. The motion picture knows no barrier of distance. We are apt to look upon the distant group or nation as something different from ourselves and therefore inimical. But a few thousand feet of celluloid film in a metal container can be sent to the ends of the earth to speak the language which everyone understands, civilized or savage, the Language of Pictures."



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The worldwide acceptance of the language of pictures as a medium of expression and the standards that allowed pictures to be gathered and presented anywhere and everywhere has provided a mechanism for entertainment, instruction, and education unparalleled in the history of mankind. This universal acceptance of motion pictures as a powerful medium of expression was established in less than a decade from the agreement within SMPTE on the 35mm film standard.

### Standards

Our Society was founded 80 years ago for the purpose of creating the standards necessary to nurture this new medium and to educate the professional community both on the current bounds on its use and the new technologies which offer opportunities to expand those boundaries. The Society's mission and commitment to the film community continues. SMPTE has 161 American National Standards, of which 106 (66%) are film-related. Of the 106 film-related standards, 11 were upgraded or otherwise revised during 1995. Of the Society's 144 Recommended Practices, 79 (55%) are film-related. Of the 79 film-related Recommended Practices, 26 were upgraded or otherwise revised during 1995, and one new film-related Recommended Practice on Classification of Projection Depth of Focus (RP 185) was approved.

The SMPTE has established 26 Engineering Guidelines, and 14 of those documents (54%) are film-related. The commitment to our heritage continues unabated.

### Role of the Society in ISO

Additionally, SMPTE serves as the Secretariat and Carl Girod, SMPTE Director of Engineering, serves as the Chairman of the International Organization for Standardization, Technical Committee on Cinematography (ISO/TC 36). This involves maintaining some 100 international standards related to motion-picture film, as well as processing about 10 new projects each year.

### Education

On the educational side, the 137th SMPTE Technical Conference and World Media Expo, held in New Orleans, September 6-9, 1995, featured two keynote speakers at the opening session and 72 papers during the four-day conference. Eighteen papers (25%) addressed traditional film-related issues such as sound on film, new sound cameras, new silver-recovery methods, and film-cleaning applications. One of the keynote speakers discussed new film animation techniques based on the use of new technologies.

### Importance of Motion Pictures

The activity on standards and the amount of program content at the conference concerning new technologies for a "mature industry" speaks to the vitality and importance of motion-picture film. The SMPTE and the motion-picture industry have traveled far since the first flickering images were demonstrated in the 1890s. The worldwide acceptance of the language of pictures places a great responsibility on the Society as the interpreter of the technology of the language. The Society continues to service the motion-picture community arts and sciences at the same time it explores new technologies, and its commitment to the film community continues unabated.

SMPTE President Stanley N. Baron is with NBC, Inc., New York, NY 10012.