

In January, SMPTE Executive Vice-President Charles Jablonski made use of this space for his introduction to the annual Progress issue. His foreword dealt, mainly, with technological progress in 1997 as reflected in our industry; but we are making progress in other areas too.

A few years ago questions were being raised about the relevance of this Society in an environment that was undergoing extensive structural change. Driven by powerful technical and economic forces, the very fabric of our industry was being stretched and torn in ways and at a pace that seemed unrelenting, unexpected, and often unnecessary. In that environment the place and purpose of SMPTE and the relevance of its services was also subject to considerable internal and external scrutiny. This provided us with even more reason to review, focus, and build on the strengths of the Society and address its perceived weaknesses. That process was begun by Past-President Stan Baron. Now that much of the repositioning work has been done, we looked forward to hosting an event that would reflect how much the industry felt we had accomplished in this time frame. The Fall Conference in New York provided the opportunity and was a remarkable success.

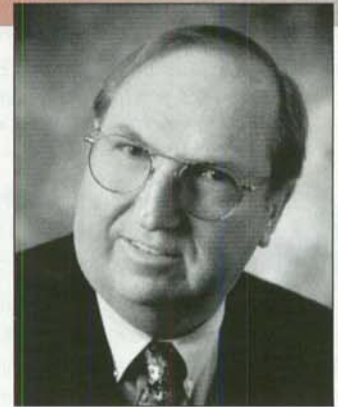
SMPTE Delivers Successful Stand-Alone Conference

If you attended, I'm sure you would agree that if anyone wanted to confirm that your Society continues to play a real and important role in the contemporary imaging world they would have to look no further than the achievements of the recent 139th Technical Conference. The level of interest and energy displayed at that Conference was highly palpable, as the Society undertook to address several of the important issues of the day in a typically balanced SMPTE forum, unrestricted by commercial and competitive agendas and concerns. Program Chairs Larry Thorpe and Bob Ross, in particular, are to be commended for putting together a great technical program that addressed some of the realities of the business and economic aspects of the planned U.S. conversion to DTV. The entire New York Conference Committee has also earned our thanks for a job well done.

This was an important Conference for your Society. In addition to acting as a barometer for our current stature in the industry, it was the first stand-alone SMPTE Conference in several years which followed on the heels of the recent breakup of the much larger World Media Expo. It represented the first SMPTE foray back into the difficult world of equipment exhibitions and the first step towards the rebuilding of our franchise in that highly competitive market. But we believe that SMPTE Conferences and associated Exhibits address a particular need in our industry to provide a specialized venue in

which we can deal seriously with technology and technical issues in a professional and non-partisan environment, and also bring informed and interested potential buyers and sellers together.

Over 5,000 people took advantage of the opportunity presented in New York to view the exhibits and explore many of the issues they will face in implementing DTV. We were pleased to have the opportunity to welcome back many of our traditional exhibitors to a SMPTE venue and provide them and you with an opportunity to meet, explore, and discuss software, hardware, applications, and technology all under the SMPTE banner. Much like the overwhelming response to the Conference Program, our available exhibit space was soon sold out.



David L. George

Bottom Line—SMPTE Provides Necessary Services

The success of the conference also reflects a renewed and heightened interest in your Society overall, as well as a better appreciation of the role that it plays in the motion imaging industry and of the services it can and does provide. I have spoken about several of these before both in person and in previous messages. The bottom line is that this Society truly provides an important set of services through its standardization and educational activities that support the needs of both member corporations and individuals. Important engineering services, like the expanded engineering activities of your Society, and the accelerated pace with which it is addressing standard setting needs within the industry, are ongoing. On the educational side, in addition to all the regular section and regional activities, this year will see us mount three important national conference events. The first for 1998, the 32nd SMPTE Advanced Motion Imaging Conference, will be held in Toronto February 5-7. The 2nd Annual Film Conference will be held in Los Angeles June 12-14, and the 140th Technical Conference and Exhibit will take place in Pasadena in October.

It's a full calendar, but there is much to talk about and explore together. It's shaping up to be an exciting and rewarding year for your Society and I trust it will be for you too.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. George', written in a cursive style.

SMPTE President David L. George is with IMMAD Broadcast Services, Markham, Ontario, Canada, L3R 0H3.