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## OBITUARIES

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### Elmer W. Engstrom

Elmer W. Engstrom, an Honorary Member of the SMPTE, died October 30, 1984, at the Meadow Lakes Retirement Community, Hightstown, N.J., at the age of 83.

A pioneer in the development of commercial television, during his distinguished career, he received honorary degrees from 14 colleges and universities

and numerous prestigious awards including the SMPTE Progress Medal (1955), the rank of Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (1960), and Commander of the Royal Order of Vasa, bestowed by the King of Sweden (1965).

Dr. Engstrom was born in Minneapolis, Minn., in 1901. He attended the University of Minnesota, graduating in 1923 with the BSEE degree. Following graduation, he joined General Electric Co. where he was assigned to engineering development work in the Radio Dept. In 1930, the radio and engineering activities of General Electric were transferred to RCA, where Engstrom was appointed division engineer in charge of Photophone with responsibility for the development and design of sound motion-picture equipment.

Later in the 1930's, Dr. Engstrom supervised RCA's program of television research and development. He brought to the project the concept of television as a complete system, instituting one of the early large-scale examples of the systems engineering concept that became standard in major technical programs. In the postwar years, as head of RCA Laboratories, he applied the same concept in directing the development program for the all-electronic color television system.

Dr. Engstrom retired in 1971. At that time he had been chairman of the executive committee of the board and chief ex-

ecutive officer of RCA since 1966. He had previously served as president of RCA. Following his retirement he continued to serve RCA as a consultant with offices in the David Sarnoff Research Center.

Engstrom was made an Honorary Member of the SMPTE in 1966. He was a member of a number of professional organizations, including the IEEE, of which he was a Fellow; the American-Scandinavian Foundation, of which he was a member of the board of trustees; the National Academy of Engineering; and others.

### Waldemar J. Poch

Waldemar J. Poch, a Life Member of the SMPTE, died October 13, 1984, at his home in Cranbury, N.J., at the age of 79.

Born in London, England, Poch was graduated from the University of Michigan with the BSEE degree in 1928, and from the University of Pennsylvania with the MSEE degree in 1934.

He began a distinguished 40-year career with RCA in 1930 at Camden, N.J., where, as a member of the Research Group on Television Receivers and Studio Equipment, he was involved in pioneering developments in monochrome television cameras. One of his assignments with the Research Group, starting in 1937, was a 10-month tour of duty in the USSR where he supervised the installation of television

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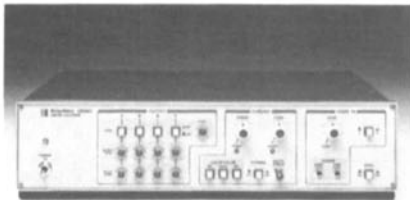
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Waldemar J. Poch

studio and transmitting equipment in Moscow.

In 1950, he became an engineering section manager in charge of the development and design of early color TV studio equipment. At that time, he resided in Moorestown, N.J., where he served as treasurer of the Moorestown Public Library for 17 years.

Poch returned to the Moscow Television Center in 1959 as a participant in the American Exhibition, and reported in the *SMPTE Journal* the progress since his first visit as representing "a major advance all along the economic and scientific front." (See "Moscow Impressions" in the May 1960 *Journal*.)

In 1962, he moved to Cranbury, having joined RCA's Astro-Electronics Div., where he worked with a team of scientists and engineers on the analysis and prediction of radiation damage in satellite solar cells and on the development of electron-beam film recording cameras. His community interests then included membership on the board of the Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society.

A registered professional engineer in the State of New Jersey, Poch published numerous technical papers and held 31 patents. He was a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers. Since the mid-1950's, he was a member of the AIEE-IRE committee on video techniques (which became the IEEE audio-video techniques committee), later serving as secretary until early in 1984.

After his retirement from RCA, Poch travelled extensively in Europe and Russia, visiting the USSR in 1972 as an IEEE delegate to the Popov Society. Also, as a member of the Linguistic Society, he translated Russian technical articles in the field of electrical communication. This hobby interest, he said, helped him to keep abreast of the developments since his previous Russian visits.

Poch joined the SMPTE in 1951, and served on the Board of Editors from 1958 through 1980. His contributions to the *SMPTE Journal* included some of his translations for reprinting as well as his own technical papers.

Poch will be remembered for his active interest in the professional and career de-

velopment of many of his younger associates. As mentor, his cheerful spirit, quietly competent manner, and ready willingness to help others will not soon be forgotten.

He leaves his wife, Nelda; a daughter, Carolyn P. Wilburn, of Shelbyville, Tex.; a brother, the Rev. Martin C. Poch of Virginia Beach, Va.; and two grandchildren. — *Raymond Hallows*



John O. Aalberg

John O. Aalberg, a Life Fellow of the SMPTE and former head of RKO Studio's Sound Dept., died August 30, 1984, in Hollywood, at the age of 87.

Aalberg was born in Chicago on April 3, 1897, and while still a teenager, he became a nickelodeon projectionist's assistant. Following active service with the U.S. Army in Europe during World War I, he received the EE degree from Armour Institute of Technology. From there, he went to Vitaphone, and was engaged in the first installations of the Vitaphone system in Chicago's theaters. He then joined RCA and moved to Hollywood to provide theaters with new sound systems that he had helped to develop. In 1929, he transferred to RKO, and shortly thereafter he became head of the Sound Dept. He remained in that post until 1957.

During World War II, Aalberg served as Chief of the Army Pictorial Service in the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations. He became a Lt. Colonel and received the Legion of Merit for the outstanding performance of his duties in the Signal Corps.

Aalberg became a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 1930 and served 11 terms on the Academy's Board of Governors. In 1938, he received a Class III Academy Award for the application of compression to variable area sound recording in motion-picture production. In 1982, he received the Academy's Gordon E. Sawyer Award, an Oscar, for technological contributions that brought credit to the motion-picture industry.

Aalberg joined the SMPTE in 1928. In 1981, he received the Samuel L. Warner Memorial Award "for more than 60 continuous years of advancing the technology of exhibiting motion pictures and recording sound."

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