
Biographical Sketch

L. John Spring, Jr. Conference Vice-President, 1990-1991

In an industry that focuses on technology, application, and standardization, it is comforting to meet a man whose main priority is people. SMPTE Conference Vice-President L. John (Jack) Spring, Eastman Kodak Co., is such a man.

"My background is in sales/marketing," Spring said. "But this business suits me to a tee. I have an affinity for people and a feeling for sales. My work at Kodak allows me to interact with people and enjoy working relationships that are very satisfying."

Spring has been in a sales and marketing capacity with Kodak since 1967. Originally from Rochester, N.Y., where Kodak headquarters is based, his career path has taken him home in a very roundabout way.

"In the past 19 years I have lived in seven locations," he explained. He started out at company headquarters working in the consumer division for film and cameras. After 2½ years he moved to the motion-picture/audio visual division. In 1970 he left Rochester for Boston, where he continued working for the motion-picture/audio visual division.

In 1971, Spring was moved to New York City as a sales and engineering representative. In 1979, he took a position in Hollywood, selling motion-picture film to the production community. His accounts included MGM, United Artists, Lorimar, and Twentieth Century-Fox. He became district sales manager for that area in 1982. "Hollywood is where you get to see the magnitude of this business," he said. "It is awe inspiring." While he was in Hollywood, Spring played a key role in coordinating the launch of a new film to the production community. "The new film, 5293, was a higher-speed product that was given trade trial and introduced in Hollywood. I was very active in that marketing campaign."



L. John Spring

As he looked back on his career, Spring paid tribute to the late Ted Voigtlander, ASC, a man who had a great impact on his life. "While I was working in Hollywood, I called on the set of 'Little House on the Prairie' and met Ted, who was the director of photography. He taught me more about the inside of this industry than I could have ever imagined. I learned how things were done and why, which helped me get a better handle on the scope of the creative process. I owe him a debt of gratitude." Spring experienced another career highlight at that time when he met actor Michael Landon, the star of "Little House on the Prairie." "It was a real thrill to interact with a celebrity," he said.

In 1984, Spring left Hollywood when he was reassigned to New York City as district sales manager. A year later he was promoted to regional sales manager for the Chicago area and spent three years in the Midwest. In 1989, however, he returned to his roots when he was promoted to regional business unit manager/Americas, working out of company headquarters.

"My job responsibilities now include the field sales of operation for North and South America for motion-picture and technical products," he said. "This is an administrative job that requires a lot of travel." Although he enjoys the challenges offered by his new position, Spring said he has one regret. "I miss being out on the front line, face-to-face with our customers. It is a big adjustment not being on the front burner, interacting with the clients on a daily basis."

The SMPTE

Spring joined the SMPTE in 1975 while he was working in New York City. "But I really wasn't active in the Society until I moved to Hollywood," he said. "Chuck Kemmerer, a co-worker, encouraged me to get involved and I'm glad he did. By joining SMPTE I learned a lot about the various parts of the business. I owe Chuck and Howard La Zare, senior vice-president, Deluxe Laboratories, a great deal for the guidance and encouragement they gave me while I was in Hollywood."

Once he became active in the Society, Spring gave it his all. From 1983 to 1984, he served as Chairman of the Hollywood Section, which was an experience that he found to be truly satisfying. "The Sections make the Society what it is," he said. "The Section members and their dedication and hard work allowed me to see the outcome of devoting time and energy. When we had special events, people attended by the numbers. There was a thirst for information and a joy of learning, and the Section meetings provided a window of opportunity. It was really one of the highlights of my career."

Spring feels that his current position as SMPTE Conference Vice-President is a natural for him because it gives him the opportunity to mesh

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with other people in the field. "As Conference Vice-President I get to work with people. That is not only important to me but something I really enjoy. In my position I make sure all parties who are involved in the conferences work together for the common good of the Society and for the common goal of education. My job is to please the customer and the customer is the attendee."

Spring has also held many other SMPTE offices including Governor-at-Large, Editorial Director for Motion Pictures, and Program Chairman for the 128th Technical Conference and Equipment Exhibit. Last year, in honor of all his contributions, he was elevated to the grade of SMPTE Fellow.

The Future

In looking ahead, Spring plans to find new opportunities for the SMPTE to position itself in the forefront of the industry. "We are entering a period when a multitude of dif-

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Spring said he has already broken new ground by selecting Toronto as the site of the 1992 Technical Conference and Equipment Exhibit and by having the Audio Engineering Society join the SMPTE in its annual Television Conference, which will be held in Detroit next year. "We are aiming at making the Society a stronger presence, and we are looking for new members and new opportunities. That is something we will see in the short term, not the long term."

Personal Background

Spring has been married to his wife, Carol, for 29 years. She is a native of Massachusetts, and the couple met

while he was stationed in an Army Security Agency based in Boston. They have two sons, Brad, 23, who has followed in his father's footsteps and works for Kodak's clinical products division, and Jayson, 20, a political science student at Clairemont College (Pitzer Campus), who is preparing to spend a semester in Washington, D.C., as part of a government program. Spring pursued his own education when he left the service, receiving a B.S. from Springfield College and an M.A. from the University of Rochester.

Although his position at Kodak and his role at SMPTE keep him on the run, Spring said he enjoys playing golf when he can. "Unfortunately, somebody told me that I'm not built for the game, so psychologically that affected my performance badly," he laughed. "It's lucky that I enjoy my work and that it consumes so much of my time."

He also shared a recent experience which he feels had a great effect on his life — both personally and professionally. "In November 1989, I had the good fortune to attend the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Motion Pictures and the 25th Anniversary of the Rose Garden Ceremony. On that day I also had the opportunity to meet the President of the U.S., see my brother-in-law's name on the Vietnam War Memorial, and fly home on the corporate jet with Kodak's chairman of the board. It was a very moving day for me, and it really caused me to reflect on my life."

In retrospect, Spring admits that he is a fortunate man. "Being in the entertainment industry gets in your blood. If I had to do it all over again, I would do it all the same. I can't imagine doing anything else. I have found a niche in life, which is a matter of luck and timing, and this is it. I like it here and this is where I plan to stay."

—Carol King



Spring explaining the duties of the Conference Vice-President to incoming officers at the training seminar for Sections officers held in Chicago.