
Biographical Sketch

B. L. Dickens, Secretary/Treasurer, 1989–1990

Although SMPTE Secretary/Treasurer Bernard L. Dickens (CBS) had no interest in the engineering field while he was growing up, fate and hard work saw to it that he have a successful career and serve as a respected member of the SMPTE.

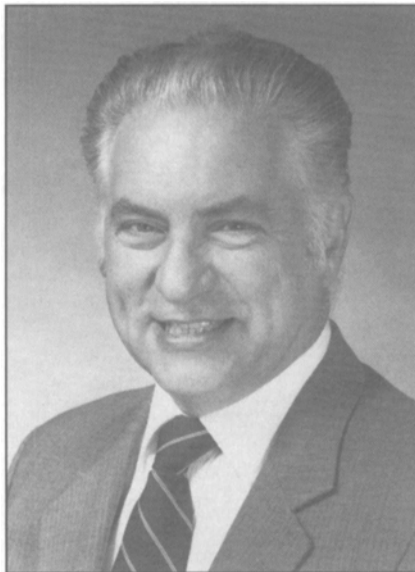
"I had no contact with engineering as a kid, but when it came time for me to graduate from high school and go on to college, I looked over my records and decided to put my strengths in science and math toward an engineering career," he said. He then enrolled at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., and received a B.S.E.E. in 1953.

Work History

His decision was obviously a choice well made. Upon graduating, he immediately went to work at RCA where he remained for 23 years. Upon completing a training program there, he served as a design engineer with the Aviation Department, Astro Electronics Division, and Airborne Systems Division of Defense Electronic Products.

In 1960, he was promoted to leader of the Project and Servos Group of the Recording Engineering Section of the Defense Electronics Products. A few years later, in 1963, he received his M.S.E.E. after taking night courses at the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1968, Dickens was selected as leader of a design development group of the Recording Engineering Section of the Broadcast Systems Department, where he was responsible for various projects relating to the development and production of television recording equipment for broadcast applications. It was during that time that Dickens received two patents for his co-invention of the TCR 100 broadcast cartridge recorder. His part in that project included the design of a cassette-threading mechanism for the first broadcast applica-



Bernard L. Dickens

tion of a cassette recorder used for short spots. However, he remains humble in spite of his accomplishments. "Although, the development of the TCR 100 was a great achievement, the real highlight was not in receiving the patent, but in serving as a member of the total design group," he said.

After the project was completed, Dickens continued at RCA as a manager of electromechanical systems and later as the leader of a demonstration team for the SelectaVision VideoDisc.

In 1976, he decided it was time to move on and joined CBS as a senior staff engineer, where he worked as a recording expert and evaluated studies for magnetic recording for TV. His early work included the investigation of recorder-introduced chroma noise and artifacts, development of the feasibility-test-phase recorders for CBS's single-camera editing system for all-electronic post-production of feature television programs, and evaluations of in-development Type-C

helical scan recorders and associated magnetic-recording tape. He currently holds the position of senior staff scientist at CBS, responsible for industry standards activities. He also provides consulting services for the department on TV technology.

The SMPTE

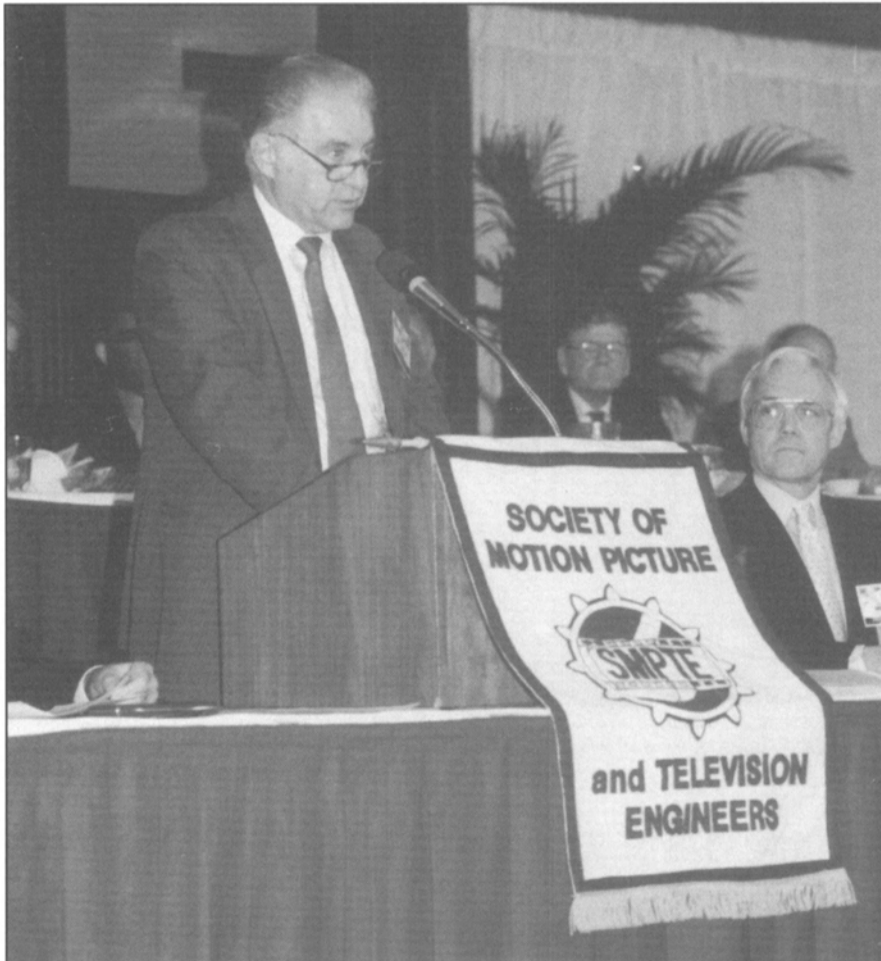
It was his position at CBS that inspired Dickens to become more active in the SMPTE Technology Committees. "I had been a member since 1970, but did not really become too involved until I joined CBS as a specialist." Since then, he has assisted the Society as a member of several engineering committees, including serving as Chairman of the Television Recording and Reproduction Committee from 1983 to 1987. While he was chairman of the committee, Dickens experienced another career highlight. "It was at that time the D-1 recording format, which the committee had been working on, was accepted." In addition, he has been a member of the Standards Committee since 1983 and was a Governor from 1988 to 1989.

In reward for his efforts on the Society's behalf, Dickens was named a Fellow in 1983. Now serving as Secretary/Treasurer, he focuses more on the managerial side of SMPTE activities. "My goals are to see that the Society continues to meet the needs of its membership and sponsors by retaining its preeminent position as an international technical society and as a national and international standards-setting organization."

The Future

In looking ahead, Dickens feels that the Society should prepare itself for the challenges that it will soon be facing. "The motion-picture and television industries are in a period of rapid change resulting from the dramatic international political changes

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Secretary/Treasurer Bernard L. Dickens making an announcement at the Honors and Awards Luncheon during the 13th SMPTE Technical Conference in Los Angeles.

as well as rapid developments in technology. The Society must adapt to these changes in the industry it serves. The SMPTE has two roles. One is disseminating technical information and the other is working on the standardization programs. In the future, we have to maintain an active role in these areas in order to justify our existence. Our roles and our applications are changing, and we need to reach out to new interest groups now, in order to secure our future."

He added that this task is made

exceedingly difficult during a time of budget constraints. "We need to expand, but we need to do so in an efficient, organized fashion that allows us to use our limited resources."

Outside Interests

Dickens is also actively involved in several other industry organizations, including the IEC and ITU/CCIR, where he focuses on international standards. He is also a U.S. delegate for the CCIR and enjoys visiting different countries and meeting people

in similar fields. "It is very interesting to meet people in the same industry throughout the world. The places I have traveled to include Tokyo, Prague, and Geneva, and it has been a wonderful experience. Although the cultures differ, I find that the people I meet are very interesting and this allows me to form friendships throughout the world."

He added that his involvement with the SMPTE and other industry organizations has given him a great sense of pride. "I have gotten a lot out of being a member of these different organizations," he said. "And it gives me a great sense of satisfaction to be involved and make lasting contributions. By doing this, I feel as though I am leaving my mark on the world."

Personal Background

A resident of Trumbull, Conn., Dickens spent his childhood in a small town in the Catskill Mountains of New York. He and his wife, Lenore, are the parents of two adult children, Karen and Mark, and have three grandchildren. When he has time, Dickens enjoys gardening and woodworking, and in the future, he plans to pursue cabinetry.

Retrospection

In looking back upon his life, Dickens observed that his career has been molded by accepting challenges. "I enjoy the changing workload that I face each day," he said. "My work is an educational process. Technology changes so quickly that it is a challenge just to continue learning. In my lifetime I have witnessed three major revolutions in the field — from vacuum tubes to transistors to integrated circuits. These changes have been astronomical from a technical standpoint, and I enjoy the new applications and educational experiences that they bring to me."

—Carol King