

Obituaries

E. M. (Al) Lewis

Motion-picture sound pioneer Al Lewis died at age 97 on September 25, 2005 at his home in Cupertino, CA. Born September 7, 1908 in Nebraska, Lewis grew up building radio sets and working as a theater projectionist. He was experimenting with audio amplifiers before the motion picture industry switched from silent to sound movies. Starting in 1927, Lewis helped install some of the first Western Electric sound systems in Midwestern movie theaters.

Lewis moved to Sacramento in 1935 to work for audio pioneer Altec, servicing theater sound systems. He worked for Ampex from 1955 until 1962, when he moved to ElectroSound. He then operated his own audio consulting company, sharing his expertise in theater sound and projection until 2005.

Among his many projects, he designed and installed multi-track sound systems for the Radio City Music Hall in New York City, the Samuel Goldwyn Theater at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and several Hollywood movie palaces. He also set up custom sound systems for Hollywood premieres, including *Funny Girl* at the Egyptian Theatre in 1968. He joined the IATSE in 1930 and later SMPTE. In 1986, the Academy of Motion Picture of Arts and Sciences awarded Lewis the Medal of Commendation for "outstanding service and dedication."

In 1990, Lewis received the Samuel L. Warner Award from SMPTE for his important contributions to the development of the Ampex 6-track theater sound system, the design of solid-state sound systems for motion picture studios and theaters, the design of magnetic record and reproduce head assemblies for the film industry, and a continuous stream of technical advancements over a long and productive career.

Betsy Driskill Long

Betsy Driskill Long, 47, cherished wife of Stephen W. Long, passed away quietly on February 6, 2006. Betsy is also survived by her mother, Dorothy Dancy Driskill of Lynchburg, VA., her brother Alec E. Driskill of Albrightsville, PA, her niece Catherine E. Driskill and nephew Alec 'Ike' E. Driskill II, both of Rehoboth Beach Delaware.

Betsy was born and raised in Lynchburg, VA, the daughter of Alec 'Buck' Driskill and Dorothy Driskill. Betsy graduated from Lynchburg College in 1981 with a degree in Natural History. After college, she worked briefly at the Norfolk Naval Supply Center, Norfolk, VA. Betsy married Stephen in 1983 and they made their home in Northern Virginia. They moved to Herndon in the summer of 1988. She worked for Burroughs/Unisys for 17 years until 2000.



David Sillman

David Sillman, a past member of the Society, died December 4, 2005 in Washington, D.C. He was 83 years old. Sillman, a native of New York City, received a Bachelors degree in electrical engineering in 1944 from the School of Technology of the City College of New York.

Upon graduation, he joined the Hazeltine Corp. in Little Neck, NY, where he was engaged in research and development of IFF aparati for the U.S. Navy. Following World War II he did research and development in the fields of frequency modulation and television home entertainment receivers. He was a participant in the efforts of the National Television System Committee, which resulted in the present color television system and standards.

In 1953, Sillman joined the Television-Radio Division of Westinghouse Electric Corp. in Metuchen, NJ, as section manager of television engineering and where from 1964 to 1968 he was division engineering manager. In 1968, Sillman returned to Hazeltine Research, Inc. (a subsidiary of Hazeltine Corp.) in Chicago, IL. as vice-president and director of research, a position he held until 1976. Among other projects developed at Hazeltine in this period was a system for closed captioning of television programs.

In 1977, Sillman joined Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) as manager of engineering planning with prime responsibility for the development of the closed captioning system. For this work, PBS was awarded with two Emmys and the technology is incorporated in virtually every television sold in the U.S.

Sillman was also the key engineer on the team responsible for designing, acquiring, and installing the PBS Satellite Replacement Project in 1988. He retired from PBS in 1992. Sillman was a past member of the Television Allocations Study Organization, and past chairman of the Receiver Panel of the Cable Television Advisory Committee, Broadcast and Television Receivers Group of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, and Field Test Task Force (EIA Sub-Committee on Teletext Standards). He was a registered professional engineer in the State of Illinois and a senior member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers.

Richard J. Stumpf

The Society sadly announce that Richard J. Stumpf, a dear friend and colleague, passed away on February 4, 2006. Dick is survived by his wife Paula, sons Rick and Andrew, and daughters Barbara and Elizabeth and their families.

(A full write-up highlighting Dick's life and career, will be published in the next issue of the Journal.)

Joseph T. Visslailli

Professional video-industry veteran Joseph T. Visslailli, 59, passed away on Wednesday, January 4, 2006. He was vice-president, Professional Sales at Fuji Photo Film U.S.A., Inc. Visslailli joined Fujifilm in 1980, rising through the ranks from sales representative to district sales and subsequently regional and national sales manager. In 1995, he was appointed as vice-president, field sales, professional products for Fujifilm Magnetic Markets Division. In 2004, his role was expanded with the merger of that division with the Computer Products Division, forming the Recording Media Division.