

SMPTE Engineering Director Carl Girod Retires

After decades working in engineering technology, Carl Girod announced his retirement from SMPTE in January, and has spent the last few months transitioning with SMPTE on his departure. In his 11 years with the Society, Carl oversaw many innovative changes to how SMPTE's Engineering Department operated, and has contributed greatly to SMPTE's continued success in standards development in the motion imaging industry. The path that brought Carl to SMPTE is worthy of highlight, spanning a full career in broadcast engineering.



SMPTE Director of Publications, David Juhren, sat down with three SMPTE VIPs who worked closely with Carl. David Horowitz, who first met Carl at CBS in New York City, Mark Richer, who worked with Carl at PBS in Washington D.C., and former SMPTE Engineering Vice-President Bill Miller, who worked closely with Carl here at SMPTE.

DJ: So, how did each of you meet Carl?

David Horowitz: I first met Carl in the late 1960s—maybe the very early 1970s, when he had his own company designing and manufacturing small audio and video peripheral or terminal equipment.

Bill Miller: I believe I met Carl while he was still at PBS, but I didn't really get to know him until I became Engineering VP.

Mark Richer: I've had the pleasure of knowing Carl for about 20 years. We worked together at PBS, before he joined SMPTE.

DJ: Carl seemed to always enter into positions and organizations that were about to go through a major change in technology or how things were being done. What was it like working with Carl through all these changes?

David Horowitz: I interviewed and hired Carl around 1973-74 when I was associate director of A/V engineering at CBS. His first project at CBS was on the World's first all-ENG station conversion at KMOX-TV in St. Louis, where he was responsible for video design. From there, we went on to convert WBBM-TV, KNXT, WCAU-TV, WCBS-TV, and CBS News to ENG, with Carl managing the projects for me. No matter the load, Carl was always dependable. He went on to work on many other projects at CBS.

Bill Miller: Working with Carl has always been a pleasure. During my tenure as Engineering VP, we made many changes to the engineering department and the technology committee structure. We started issuing standards on CD and on the internet, and switched from postal mail to e-mail. We started balloting on the Web, and began bringing a server to meetings and exchanging drafts electronically. We also set up the SMPTE Registration Authority.

None of this would have happened without a lot of hard work on Carl's part. He was the one who had to set up and run the networks, find ISPs and Web hosting, develop the balloting software, administer the Registration Authority and the Federal grant that funded its startup, author and master the Standards CDs, and deal with almost constant changes to the Administrative Practices, as we continually tweaked them to optimize efficiency and transparency. This was all done in addition to his regular workload of administering the Engineering Department, chairing ISO TC36, and handling

relations with any number of other standards organizations, including ANSI. Carl did it all cheerfully and without complaint. I am forever in his debt.

Mark Richer: Carl was an excellent engineer and manager. He was extremely methodical and nearly unflappable. When others became frantic, Carl would always focus on the fundamental issues.

DJ: Is there anything non-business-oriented that might be fun or of interest to share?

Bill Miller: A couple of years ago, Les Paul visited our Fall Conference in New York and shared his wisdom with us. Carl wrote up his remarks for the *SMPTE Motion Imaging Journal*, noting that in his younger years he had owned a Les Paul guitar, earning part of his college tuition by playing it. I regret I've never had the pleasure of hearing Carl play.

DJ: I've had that pleasure, and you're right, few people really know that Carl is an accomplished musician. I found out when we were at a SMPTE Conference in Dallas, and a few of the staff were standing at this piano in some out-of-the-way place in the hotel going over notes. Carl sat down and just started playing...we were dumbstruck. It came as a surprise, very much like his occasionally dry, yet witty, one-liners.

David Horowitz: Yes, Carl is quiet, but expresses himself with his music and sense of humor. It took me a while to get used to his style of answering questions. Rather than answering immediately, there was usually a thoughtful pause while he formulated his response, which was always on-target. It has been a pleasure to know him professionally and as a friend.

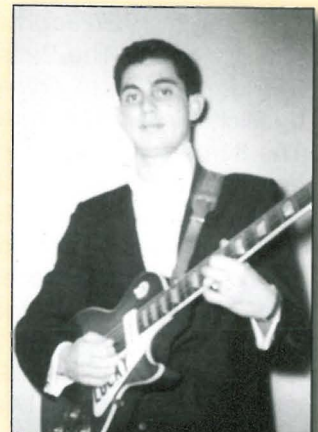
Mark Richer: I fondly remember the many lunches that I shared with Carl and the late David Sillman. Carl had a subtle, but great sense of humor.

DJ: What do you think is Carl's legacy here at SMPTE?

Mark Richer: Over the years that Carl has been at SMPTE, it has truly become an international organization. During Carl's tenure, SMPTE became a much more effective and efficient organization. Carl deserves a lot of the credit for making SMPTE the highly-respected technical organization that it is today.

Bill Miller: Carl is largely responsible for making SMPTE's transition from a paper-based organization to an electronic one. These days, employers put a premium on finding people who champion and enable change. SMPTE was fortunate to have had such an executive in Carl. I certainly don't know what I'd have done without him.

David Horowitz: Mark and Bill have covered this well from the organization's perspective. I have also seen him deal with individual members and prospective members at trade shows where his positive personality and demeanor reflected well on our organization. We are all going to miss him.



Carl Girod with his Gibson Les Paul model guitar in 1956.