

Member Profile: Clyde Smith

SMPTE Life Fellow Clyde Smith has earned numerous awards for his outstanding technical contributions to the progress of the broadcast industry: A North American Broadcasters Association (NABA) International Achievement Award, an Emmy Award, the Broadcasting and Cable's Technology Leadership Award, the SMPTE Progress Medal, the SMPTE Outstanding Service Award, and SMPTE's David Sarnoff Medal, among others. Continually passing along his knowledge and skills, Smith has instilled in countless industry professionals the desire to learn, serve, and foster the growth of an even better next generation.

Smith's own interest in electronics and electrical engineering systems was inspired by a 1962 trip with his father to Andover, ME, to see the newly commissioned earth station for project Telstar. Growing up in rural Maine in the 1950s and 1960s, Smith was fascinated by the space program but didn't feel he'd have the opportunity to be a part of it. Still, when he learned that if the earth station's amplifier were used on audio frequencies under just the right conditions, it could pick up the sound of a bee buzzing in India, he was hooked.

Having both an FCC First Class Radio Operators License and a good radio voice, Smith worked nights and weekends during college at Bangor's WLBZ AM radio station as a transmitter operator/engineer and announcer. Although his first job out of college was as an avionics technician for Trans East Airlines at Bangor International Airport, Smith moved into broadcast with a job at WEMT TV. He subsequently held top engineering posts at a number of broadcast stations, solving problems with new technology all along the way.

In 1987, he became Lockheed Space Operations' supervisor of

communications design and development engineering at the Kennedy Space Center (KSC), where he helped implement improvements to space shuttle transportation systems following the Challenger accident. While at KSC, Smith pioneered fiber optic transmission of high speed data, as well as remote camera video and control signals on a single fiber, instituted digital photography by inspectors and web-based access to resulting images, and contributed to the first use of HDTV to document the processing operations and launch of a space shuttle. Smith then joined Turner Broadcasting as the director of advanced technology for network operations, where he launched the first all-digital video server-based, all-automated network, Cartoon Brazil, and helped to create an automated server-based closed captioning system that was later recognized with an Engineering and Technical Emmy.

In 1998, Smith moved to Speer Worldwide Digital, where he managed operations of an all-digital facility and contributed to the launch of ABC's Soap Net, production of hundreds of live events, and the revitalization of Staples Arena in Los Angeles. Two years later, having navigated both technical and organizational challenges to make Speer successful again, Smith returned to Turner. As the SVP of the Turner Entertainment Group, he oversaw the construction of a 193,000 sq. ft. all-digital, server-based broadcast facility in Atlanta to support 30 major networks and 87 feeds at launch. Smith also led the design and implementation of new facilities for Turner's network origination in London and Buenos Aires.

Smith helped develop Turner's award-winning broadcast inventory manager solution and also worked with the Advanced Media Workflow Association (AMWA) to develop the

MXF Mastering Format specification, presented at NAB2007. As Turner's representative on the FCC Video Programming and Emergency Access Advisory Committee, Smith helped to convince the committee to adopt a new SMPTE standard for timed text (SMPTE 2052) as a safe harbor to create a level of interoperability and facilitate rapid repurposing of broadcast captioning for online usage.



During this time, Smith had been working with Richard Fiedel of Fox Network Engineering and Operations (NE&O) to create Bridging the Gap, a program that trained broadcast engineers and IT engineers on the specific design requirements of IT network utilization for broadcast applications. In 2012, Smith accepted an invitation from Fox to serve as the SVP of new technologies for Fox NE&O. He held key roles in creating the technology that resulted in the award-winning Fox Sports 1 implementation of a collaborative cloud-based system. Also, while at Fox, Smith chaired a group within NABA that worked with SMPTE, AMWA, AD-Id, the European Broadcasting Union, and the U.K.'s Digital Production Partnership (DPP) to address various file-based interoperability issues among broadcasters and to facilitate global program exchange.

Upon his semi-retirement, Smith began working with Chris Lennon of MediAnswers to author "The Media Workflow Puzzle: How It All Fits Together," once again finding a way to help develop the next generation of broadcast engineers.

Smith is an Honorary Member of the IABM. He served for 15 years on the SMPTE Board of Governors, is a former standards chair, and secretary/treasurer of SMPTE, and he has been the program chair of four SMPTE advanced-imaging conferences. 