



Charles F. Jenkins
Founding of SMPTE

Herbert Barnett
1953-1954

Kenneth M. Mason
1974-1975

M. Carlos Kennedy
1987-1988

Wendy Aylsworth
2013-2014

Renard T. Jenkins
2023-2024

Rich Welsh
2025-2026

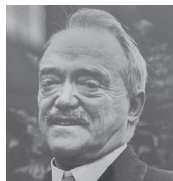
Eric Gsell
2027-2028

SMPTE Spotlight:

SMPTE Presidents

BY RUSSELL POOLE

Over the course of 110 years, SMPTE leadership has been at the forefront of the industry. Those who bear the title of SMPTE President have presided over a century of standardization, education initiatives, and a community of engaged, passionate peers. SMPTE has had many presidents over the past century, each making an indelible impact on the organization and the industry. While we certainly do not mean to minimize the contributions of any of them, we wanted to highlight a few to showcase SMPTE's evolution and the lasting influence of its leaders.



Charles F. Jenkins was the founder of SMPTE and one of the most influential figures in the motion imaging sciences.

Jenkins transmitted the first wireless moving images in 1923, after a young deaf girl reached out to him, requesting a way to experience the stories told over the radio. Jenkins' first transmission was of a pair of hands performing different signs. The second was of a toy windmill. From there it was off to the races. Jenkins' inventions eventually led to the modern notion of television, quite the accolade for the founder of our esteemed organization.



Herbert Barnett served as SMPTE president from 1953-1954 and presided over the organization during the advent of breakthroughs in wide-screen and stereo sound. This was also the advent of 3D technology, though that technology

was often called "confusing" by engineers and audiences at the time. Even with mixed reviews of these innovations, membership in SMPTE exploded under Barnett, and the Society continued to thrive as members sought new ways to bring stories to the masses.



Kenneth M. Mason served as president from 1974-1975, and presided over SMPTE's Emmy win for the Television Time Code. Even

more impressive, he helped SMPTE establish its international presence by arranging for the organization to attend overseas conferences. He also expanded SMPTE's conference offerings, ensuring the organization holds a conference in the U.S. every year instead of every two years.



M. Carlos Kennedy served as president from 1987-1988, and presided over SMPTE's Emmy win for D-1 Standards. In fact, he was on the working

group for those Standards. Kennedy helped expand SMPTE's international reach, including through his work in Beijing, where he showcased a range of technologies that helped cement television as a mature industry.



Wendy Aylsworth, SMPTE's first female president, served from 2013-2014. Aylsworth has spent her career advocating for women in male-dominated

fields, including aerospace engineering, production engineering, and

animation technology and operations. She brought that same commitment to her work with SMPTE and later joined the Science and Technology Council of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.



Renard T. Jenkins served as SMPTE's first Black president from 2023-2024. During his presidency, he oversaw a revitalization

of the Media Technology Summit and increased student participation, including the first student chapter from an HBCU, Clark Atlanta University. Additionally, he helped SMPTE navigate the rough waters of AI when it first hit the industry, and paved the way for the current SMPTE administration.



Rich Welsh is the current SMPTE president and has led several strategic initiatives to position the organization for the future.

During his presidency, Welsh has overseen the release of free SMPTE Standards to the industry, championed AI initiatives such as content provenance and authenticity, and provided support for the SMPTE 110 Anniversary Donation Campaign to raise funds for the future of SMPTE education.



Eric Gsell will be the next SMPTE president and will serve from 2027 to the end of 2028. Gsell is currently

the Executive Vice President, and has been a member of SMPTE for years, serving in the Standards community and as a Section leader. Gsell's leadership experience will serve him well as SMPTE's next president, and we can't wait to see what he has in store.

These are only a few of the people who made SMPTE what it is today. Each of these leaders has had an illustrious career, and their innovative mindsets—before, during, and beyond their terms as SMPTE President—have helped shape SMPTE into the powerhouse organization it is today. SMPTE presidents will continue to carry the banner of innovation and success, ensuring the organization thrives over the next century.

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