

In Memoriam

phone-balancing transformer for this long-lived design.

In 1976 he met and married Brenda Miller, who later became his business partner. Always a visionary, Frank moved his company from Los Angeles to Las Vegas in 1979. Los Angeles lost an AES volunteer and committeeman, but Las Vegas and the larger audio community were the richer for it. Sescom went on to develop innovative Just-In-Time manufacturing techniques. Members of the broadcast, concert sound, and recording communities discovered if you really needed something now, Sescom was the one to call. In-house sheet metal and circuit board manufacturing capabilities allowed a morning rush order to be fabricated, built, tested and shipped by Fed Ex before the day was out. No other audio interface manufacturer had the same range of audio solutions in their catalog and the ability to deliver so quickly.

Creating useful products was one of Frank's pleasures. He had no patience for "ivory tower" solutions. He felt that the real validation of a design was when you solved a customer's problems at a price he could afford. A voracious reader who could quote his sources almost verbatim, he considered most of his solutions just common sense. He listened and read and then created small useful products. Ron Streicher describes such an event. "I had asked several manufacturers to build a utility XLR male to female barrel that could be programmed for a variety of tasks. One of them told me to talk to Sescom. I described an insulated barrel with polarity flip, ground lift and other switchable functions. Frank understood the utility of it immediately. A few weeks later he sent me one to try out. It is now in the Sescom catalog, and I have six of them in my remote recording kit."

Frank was somewhat of an audio evangelist who exhibited regularly at trade shows from Europe to Singapore. He loved shopping on the Ginza, Japan's largest electronics center and a real toy store for audio innova-



Franklin J. Miller
1943-2000

tions. He wanted to share his knowledge and wrote popular articles for magazines such as *Electronics Now*. He wrote relevant and straightforward manuals for his products and always made time to talk with his customers. Complications from diabetes curtailed his traveling and working schedules in the 90s, but he saw this as an opportunity to do more writing and R&D. He built an R&D facility in his home, which was a comprehensive marvel of compactness, and started doing more writing. Short works, such as his 1995 *Audio Demystified: Making it Simple*, reflect his straightforward style and insistence on including understandable definitions of audio terms.

Frank was a long-term member of the AES and the IEEE and had been chairman of the Las Vegas IEEE. He was still operating Sescom with his wife, Brenda, and son, David, when he died. Most companies are known for a few products, but Franklin Miller was known for making a very large assortment of handy gadgets for getting engineers out of trouble. He was one of my heroes, and he will be missed.

Wes Dooley

Sidney S. Smith, AES life member, passed away on October 25, 2000, at the age of 77. The cause of death was pancreatic cancer. I considered him one of the greatest, most gifted and brilliant audio engineers that ever lived. He was a legend in his time.

Sidney got his start after World War II, working for the late Ed Miller at Radiocraftsmen in Chicago. Being an aspiring operatic tenor, however, drew him to New York where he got an engineering job at a fledgling company called the Marantz Company. Through his designs and brilliance, Marantz soon became the unrivaled premier company in the audio industry. His designs include the Models 2, 5, 8, 9, and 8B tube amplifiers. He also designed the Model 6 electronic crossover and the legendary Model 7C tube preamp. His premier accomplishment, however, was hiring and teaming up with Dick Sequerra to develop the world renowned Model 10B stereo tuner. Sidney followed this up with the solid state 7T preamp and the world's first state-of-the-art solid state power amplifier, the Model 15, which today will still hold its own against modern products.

When Superscope purchased the Marantz Company and intended to move it to the West Coast, virtually none of the technical people at Marantz were willing to move west. Sidney left the company. Dick Sequerra followed shortly after, and they again teamed up to produce an incredible piece of audio gear, namely, The Sequerra Model One stereo tuner.

His later years were spent mainly relaxing and enjoying his grandchildren. He did, however, stay in touch with the audio world. To me he was the smartest of the smart, the brightest of the bright, and the best of the best. In addition, he was one of the nicest people one could hope to meet. Sidney was my mentor and best friend for 35 years. He may be gone, but his genius will live on forever.

James Bongiorno