

In Memoriam

Heinz K. Thiele, AES fellow, died on March 4, in Hamburg-Ohlsdorf near his home in Schwarzenbek, Germany. He had just celebrated his 85th birthday. Thiele was well known for his work in audio and cinematographic history, which he dedicated to the AES Historical Committee.

Born 1917 in Dresden, he graduated from the Technical High School in electrical engineering. The first contact with his life passion, audio and video technology, came when he worked in the sound laboratory of Zeiss Ikon in Dresden, prior to his study of electrical engineering. He was fascinated with the AEG Magnetophone, introduced at the 1935 Radio Exhibition in Berlin, based on the magnetic tape, an invention of Fritz Pfleumer in 1929 in Dresden. In 1937, at the age of 20, he began his career at the Central Laboratory of AEG in Berlin, where he developed amplifiers and oscilloscopes.

During World War II he was drafted into military service. He was able to arrange teaching at the HF- and Telecommunication school of the army. After World War II he founded Apparatebau Thiele in Gunzenhausen, Bavaria, a company which manufactured sound movie amplifiers and oscilloscopes.

In 1950 he joined Zeiss Ikon again and became head of the sound laboratory in Kiel and later in Stuttgart where amplifiers, loudspeakers and drives for movie projectors as well as still camera electronics were

developed. In 1971 he became technical manager of Ullstein AV, a subsidiary of the Axel Springer Publishing House in Hamburg. He was responsible for AV hardware, e. g. the video disc system. From 1978 on he was a consulting engineer for audiovision.

Since the beginning of his career, he had gathered documents on the progress of audio and video technology. Although he lost his first archive in the great raid of Dresden in 1945, he continued his work after the war. He gave his archive to the Technical University of Berlin. At home there are still a large number of interviews he recorded on compact cassette of famous people in the audio and/or video world, called "ein

Nachmittag mit" ("An Afternoon with"). Some of the subjects included Professor Walter Bruch, inventor of the PAL-color-TV-standard, the physicist Mandred von Ardenne, and Friedrich W. O. Bauch, the first technical director of RIAS in West Berlin.

In 1985, after his retirement, he became an AES member and collaborated at the Historical Session during the 77th AES Convention in Hamburg, Germany (1985). The Historical Committee then became more active.

Thanks to Heinz and Friedrich Engel of BASF, we discovered Helmut Krueger, who made the first stereo recordings on magnetic tape in 1943 in Berlin. During the Berlin convention in 1993, we honored Krueger. Thiele put together a special booklet in German on "50 Jahre Stereo-Magnetband-technik," of which seven of the eight contributions also appeared in English as a preprint.

Before his death Thiele was in the process of preparing presentations for the 112th AES Convention in Munich in May 2002. He was a fellow of the AES and SMPTE and honored member of FKGT as well as of several other technical and scientific societies. From 1986 until 1999 he was chair of the AES Technical Archives Committee, Europe Region. He was still active and a close friend. We will miss his knowledge of audio technology. He is survived by his wife Ulla, a daughter, son, and grandchildren.

Manfred Krause,
Herman A.O. Wilms
and Reinhard O. Sahr



Heinz K. Thiele
1917-2002