

# In Memoriam



Donald B. Archer



G. H. R. Taylor

The Audio Engineering Society lost a life member with the death of **Donald Bennett Archer** in Toronto on July 19, 1992. Don was a devoted member of the AES. His enthusiasm and energy had been instrumental in developing the membership and activity level of the Toronto Section.

Born in 1923, Don gained his initial experience in audio and communications during his service in World War II in the Canadian Army Signal Corp. In the course of his working years he was employed in a number of capacities for the following companies: T. Eaton Co., A & A Radio, Bay-Bloor Radio, A. C. Simmonds & Sons Ltd., and as a consultant for Noresco. At Simmonds, Don played a significant role as audio specialist for some 15 years, including involvement in Shure audio clinics and the promotion and sale of Acoustic Research audio systems. In his spare time he was also an ardent radio amateur. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church, and contributed his time and energy to acoustic and audio design and installation in the church.

He is survived by his wife, Dorothy, and daughter, Judee.

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It was with deep regret that the recording media industry and the world of audio recording learned of the death in June of AES Member **G. H. R. Taylor**, known to all as Roy. It has not been possible personally to inform other than his immediate colleagues, but to inform his many friends all over the world it is my sad privilege to write this obituary. He was not only one of the great pioneers in magnetic recording technology, but also a close colleague of mine for just over 40 years. Educated at the Wycombe Royal Grammar School, Roy served for a time at the end of World War II in a technical capacity in the Royal Air Force and spent the next 15 years working in laboratories in the cathode ray tube industry. His abilities, both in electronics and in leadership, soon took him to managerial rank, and the television and video experience he gained served him in good stead in his later contributions to video recording media.

In 1965, I was fortunate to be able to persuade Roy to join John Wooler and myself in the laboratories of the EMI's magnetic media manufacturing operations, which at that time were collaborative with Philips, and to take management responsibility for all matters of testing and of applications in the field as well as in development and manufacture. This led to his

membership in various standardization committees for analog audio and for video media, nationally here in the UK and also as chairman of IEC working groups, visiting around the world and making friends as he did so. He was active in the technical work of the British and the European Tape Industry Associations and in the Audio Engineering Society. When he left EMI in 1981 at the closure of their tape activities, he was deputy technical manager of the laboratories there. Since that time, he practiced as a consultant and as an independent test and measurements engineer, serving many companies both large and small, including projects in collaboration with Magnetic Media Information Services' activities.

His lifelong interests included weaponry—he was an expert rifle shot and an experienced armorer—and he had a love of jazz and of music recording in general, which predated his direct involvement in the industry. He was himself a competent performer on the trumpet, and I treasure a copy of a letter from his friend, Louis Armstrong, writing in glowing terms of the quality of a recording Roy had done for him. This love of music served him well in his semiretirement years. He continued to work with local groups and bands, doing recording for them.

Many young people today would do well to emulate his rigorous personal standards in scientific and technical work. Several who are now in positions of responsibility are advantaged by the training they got in his laboratories in their formative years. On my wreath I wrote a phrase from an English writer of the seventeenth century, who referred in a religious story to the passing of the river of death by one Mr. Valiant-for-Truth: "And all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side." For Roy was not only himself a trumpeter, but

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he was indeed valiant for truth in all of his life and work. Near enough, or probably all right, would never survive in his laboratories: everything was to be precise and subject to his insight as to whether a result or a piece of equipment was viable. But he was no pedant. Once facts were clear, he was generous and practical in his judgment of the implications and "wise in his generation." He accepted the trend from the analog recording which he loved to digital techniques, but remained perceptive enough never to allow the work of a software engineer to get in his line of sight between a result and the real evidence of an experiment or the reality of a recording.

Roy is survived by his two sons, Christopher and John, and two grandchildren. And by a grievous gap in the hearts of those of us who had worked with him over the years.

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**T**he pathway to personal and artistic fulfillment for the individual is often found in the pursuits associated with audio. If this were not the case, why would the world be populated with so many audiophiles? Certainly a giant of modern musical exploration and composition was the late **John Cage**, who died August 12, 1992 in New York at the age of 79.

John Cage in the U.S. and Karlheinz Stockhausen in Europe led the way to the creation of electronic music, the coupling of audio engineering technology and musical artistic values into a whole new listening medium. Cage enlarged the sphere of audio. Others continue in that pursuit but Cage's pioneering work has given an original direction.

Donald J. Plunkett  
Executive Director