

# In Memoriam



John G. Humble  
1922 – 2002

**J**ohn Granville Humble was born December 31, 1922, in Lincoln, Nebraska. As a boy, he loved to take things apart to see how they worked, and then put them back together, trying carefully not to have any left over parts. He often used his little brother to determine if certain “high voltage” areas of his disassembled radios were fully discharged and safe to touch.

John was always, intrigued with all communications media. He loved newspapers, and was knowledgeable about the history of all of the famous publications of the time. In the eighth grade, he enlisted the help of several of his friends and published his own newspaper, *The News Recorder*, which he sold every Friday for two cents a copy. It wasn't long before he and the other boys associated with the paper had completed a wired communication network to each of their houses spanning several city blocks.

John always excelled in his studies and was recommended by his chemistry and physics teachers to apply for the Midland Radio School Scholarship. Midland, located in Missouri, was one of the most prestigious radio training schools at that time. John took their advice and was accepted after graduating from high school in 1941. Midland Radio School was founded by Arthur B. Church and was affiliated with KMBC in Kansas City, MO. Many radio personalities began their careers at KMBC including John

Cameron Swayze, Ted Malone, Walter Cronkite and Caroline Ellis. After completing his studies at Midland, he worked for a radio station in Waycross, GA, for about a year. He then returned to Kansas City and worked for Radio Station KMBC as a radio engineer.

In the early 1960s John came to California to work as the Northwest sales representative for Altec Lansing Corporation. It was at Altec that he began to develop his well regarded reputation in the audio industry. As the years passed, he moved in the direction of the theater sound product division. In theater sound, the Altec name was held in high regard because most of the solid engineering practices were adopted from the early days at Western Electric.

Because John never took any endeavor lightly, he quickly became an authoritative figure and a bit of a historian for the theater sound division. He represented quite a lot more than that of salesman. He used his well trained background in engineering and radio, and adapted it well to audio. Many distinguished engineers at Altec, like Bill Hayes, remember having technical conversations with him as often as three times a week.

John was never pretentious; he never came across as a “know-it-all.” He did, however, know quite a bit, and for questions a customer might have that he didn't know, he was always sure to find the answer. In this way,

he would learn little extra pearls of audio wisdom and history along the way. During these years, and many to follow, he earned the respect of many leaders in the audio industry,

As the theater business started to decline, Altec began to focus more on engineered sound. John saw this as an opportunity to begin his own business. He became an independent sales representative for a number of products. Shortly after taking on a new, unknown line of commercial sound equipment manufactured in Japan by the TOA Electric Company, he moved to Southern California.

After talking to many people since John's death, the one word most often mentioned was integrity. His honesty and integrity along with his sincere love of the business was his key to success. He was always on the side of the customer; and everyone enjoyed seeing him show up at their office.

During the 29,063 days he spent here on earth (he died July 27),s John made many friends and took an interest in young people starting out in the sound industry, mentoring them to successful careers. He was also involved with neighborhood charity projects of his own and, living up to his name, never mentioned them.

Those who have worked with John will never hear the familiar words “John Humble” in the receiver again. A dear friend will be sorely missed.

Tim Clark, John Murray  
and Thomas P. Leach