

# In Memoriam



William A. Fink

**W**illiam A. Fink, AES life member, died on March 16, after a long illness. An electronics executive and consultant, Fink was 82 years of age. He lived in California for many years.

Fink was born in Pennsylvania and attended the Philadelphia Technical Institute. In the early 40s he was drafted by the U.S. Navy to install radar equipment on battleships in Norfolk, Virginia.

Fink had a long career in management consulting, most recently (since 1988) as president of Professional Management Engineers (PME), Inc. in Menlo Park, CA. His clients were electronics organizations in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. He was involved in marketing, product planning, technology assessment, and corporate identity.

In the 1950s he worked as a sales/marketing manager for the Bozak Speaker Company where he made many friends and clients in the audio industry. Moving into the field of audio/visual technology, he worked for Ampex Corporation from 1961 to

1971. There he was involved with audio and video, entertainment and industrial products. After that he worked for Conrac Corporation in Covina, CA, as manager of video products, where he had direct responsibility for all engineering, product management, and production planning. He left Conrac for Thomson-CSF Broadcast (formerly CBS Professional Products) as vice president and director of marketing from 1978 to 1981. For almost a decade he managed exhibits at the National Association of Broadcasters' (NAB) annual conventions all over the U.S.

Fink was known for always having a penlight and screwdriver in his pocket as well as for his encyclopedic knowledge of electronic manufacturing methods and specifications.

In addition to the AES he was a member of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, the Society of Broadcast Engineers, and the Society of Cable Television Engineers.

Fink is survived by his wife of 40 years, Geraldine.

**J**ohn E. Howell, AES member, died of lung cancer on January 25, at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital in Alexandria, Virginia. He was 66 years of age. A native of Washington, D.C., Howell was raised and educated in the area, attending George Washington University. He served in the Air Force from 1956 to 1960.

Howell was a recordist at the Library of Congress, who recovered sounds from displaced Holocaust sur-

vivors and field recordings of ethnographers interviewing American Indians. He became an expert in his field. He was even able to recover the sound of a door closing for a murder trial in Florida two years ago.

According to the former head of the recorded sound section at the Library of Congress, Howell had good ears and the mechanical ability to work with old machines and obsolete media. Howell was a recording engineer at the library from 1960 to 2003. Many believed he had a hand in saving history by finding a device that could play recordings made in 1946 of Holocaust survivors found in displaced persons camps. Their voices were on reels of magnetized steel wire, stored in a box in a corner of the library. Nothing was able to play the reels until he found two broken Peirce wire recorders, replaced their parts, and rebuilt one. He also mastered the library's classic 15-record anthology, *Folk Music in America*, edited by Dick Spottswood.

Howell recorded live performances of musicians who played at the library, often for radio broadcast. The music division in which he worked later became the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division. He became supervisor of the special formats section, working closely with the library's American Folklife Center, copying early recordings of folk song collectors. In the 1960s he coedited the AES newsletter.

After his retirement, he operated a home business copying from early media for families, universities, and homicide trial attorneys.

Howell is survived by his wife, Peggy, two daughters, and a sister.