

Obituaries

Daniel von Recklinghausen 1925–2011



Daniel von Recklinghausen died at the age of 86 on 22 August 2011 in his hometown of Hudson, New Hampshire, USA. He was born in New York City on 22 January 1925 to inventor Maximilian von Recklinghausen and Elsa Matusch von Recklinghausen. His family moved back to Munich, Germany when he was two. At a young age he was curious about electronics and radio in particular. In 1941 he started formal apprenticeship at Rohde & Schwarz, where he met three men of his age who were all interested in applying emerging technologies to the Resistance. They formed a group (“Vierergruppe”) and at first only distributed pamphlets around the city. Then, Daniel built a radio transmitter in his bedroom which could rebroadcast forbidden foreign programs on a varying frequency (so as to avoid detection by the Nazis’ vans fitted with RF sniffers). Some time later, the Vierergruppe leader painted large “V” (for Victory) signs all over Munich and was arrested, followed in a matter of days by the other three colleagues. By the time of Daniel’s arrest, his mother had already disabled the transmitter, and with her daughter, had broken up the aircheck discs and disposed of them separately, piece by piece. Daniel was initially sentenced to death but later to eight years of hard labor (in a “Zuchthaus”). He survived the ordeal in a single-minded manner: by his photographic memory of

technical magazines and by inventing in his head what he would later patent. In the meantime, the family home was destroyed by bombs, and his mother and sister relocated to a refugee camp in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

Two years after Germany was liberated by the Allies (and Daniel freed from a satellite camp of Dachau), the family immigrated to the United States. In 1951 he graduated from MIT with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering. He started his career at the Research Laboratory of Electronics, the High Voltage and Acoustics Laboratories of MIT (doing development work on microwave meters and generators, reverberation devices, and recording studio facilities).

In 1951 Daniel was employed as a research audio engineer at H. H. Scott (developing top-quality Hi-Fi components for the rapidly-growing home audio market). He was named chief research engineer in 1955 and technical director in 1969. In 1973 he was appointed staff consultant at Electro Audio Dynamics. In 1975 he was appointed vice president of research and development for KLH (where he patented computer-controlled loudspeakers). Additionally, he oversaw developments for their subsidiaries American Electromedics Corporation (microprocessor-based medical instrumentation) and Infinity (membrane loudspeakers and, in particular, the “DvR tweeter”). In 1984 he became an independent consultant in acoustics and electronics. He held 24 U.S. patents on circuits and devices for high-quality sound reproduction, instrumentation, and measurement, and wrote numerous articles on these subjects.

Daniel had been a member of the National Stereophonic Radio Committee and chaired several of its subcommittees. He was chairman of Panel 4 (Receivers) of the National Quadraphonic Radio Committee (IEEE G-AE) and chairman of the Boston Chapter for that group. He was chairman of the IEEE Subcommittee on Frequency Modulation Receivers and chairman of the Standards Committee of the Institute of High Fidelity. A fellow of the AES and IEEE, he was also a member of

the ASA. He was a member of Tau Beta Pi, Sigma Xi, and Eta Kappa Nu.

His long association with the AES started in 1958. He received a Fellowship in 1962, was president in 1967, chaired various committees, and served as governor. In 1978 he received the Gold Medal in recognition of his work in FM receiver technology. He served as a member of the Review Board of the Journal for more than 30 years and became editor in 1991. In 2004 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for long-term outstanding service as editor of the AES Journal.

Daniel was known to give advice to those in the audio field: “If it measures good and sounds bad, it is bad; if it measures bad and sounds good, you’ve measured the wrong thing.” He mentored many aspiring audio engineers, including the author of this article. He was a member of the New England Cruiser Association and an official observer of predicted log yacht races. He received the Outstanding Young Men of Greater Boston Award from the Boston Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1960. As with many audio engineers, he was a talented and avid photographer, taking over 10,000 pictures with his “double-barreled Canon” single-lens reflex. He could converse with colleagues and grandchildren while barbecuing to perfection. For relaxation he would play Flanders & Swann, Hoffnung, Tom Lehrer, and Spike Jones recordings; with his photographic memory he knew all their lines by heart.

In addition to Carolyn, his wife of 51 years, survivors include two sons, Friedrich (and wife Juliana) of Newbury, NH, and Christoph of Nashua, NH; two grandchildren, Daniel of Boston, MA and Tatiana of Ottawa, ON; a sister, Marianne Bowles of Falls Church, VA; a nephew, David von Recklinghausen Bowles of Berkeley, CA; and a niece, Margaret (Bowles) Price of New Fairfield, CT. A private memorial service was held on 10 September. His ashes were placed near a radio transmitter in Mt. Washington, NH; the family only found out after the ceremony that he had worked on that site in the 1960s. A fitting conclusion to a fascinating life and career.

David v.R. Bowles