

# Obituaries

## Jiri Tichy (1927–2019)



Jiri Tichy, a Fellow of the Audio Engineering Society, was born in 1927 in the former Republic of Czechoslovakia (in the present Czech Republic) and passed

away on March 27, 2019, in Prague. He studied electrical engineering and physics, received a doctorate in Technical Sciences (DSc) from the Czech Technical University in Prague in 1952, and was awarded the Diploma Habil in 1965. He continued to work at the Czech Technical University first as an assistant and then associate professor in the Department of Physics.

Jiri was acquainted with two well-known American acousticians: Lawrence Batchelder and Leo Beranek, who helped him to immigrate to the United States in 1968 during the Prague Spring. Jiri started at Penn State University as an associate professor of architectural acoustics in the Graduate Program in Acoustics, an inter-college graduate program created in 1965 at Penn State. After promotion to full professor in 1972, Jiri moved full time to the Graduate Program in Acoustics where he served as chairman until his retirement in 1995. Under Jiri's tenure the program quadrupled in size and the number of courses doubled. During those years, graduate enrollment also increased from 30 to over 100 students. He established a Continuing Education Program for industry, and a Certificate Program in Acoustics. He also mentored 28 M.S. and Ph.D. students. The Graduate Program in Acoustics overall has awarded several hundred Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in a wide range of acoustics.

Jiri's principal academic interests were architectural acoustics, noise control, the acoustic intensity technique, active noise control, and virtual reality. He taught courses in architectural and building acoustics, theoretical acoustics, active

noise control, and the intensity technique at Penn State, the Czech Technical University in Prague, and various industrial groups.

Jiri was well known throughout the world as a leading researcher and educator in acoustics. He published over 80 papers in journals and conference proceedings, a majority coauthored with his students, coauthored seven books, presented many invited and contributed papers as well as keynote lectures at professional meetings around the world. His most recent book entitled *Acoustics of Small Rooms*, coauthored with Mendel Kleiner, published in 2017, comprehensively covers Jiri's unwavering devotion to understanding the influence of room acoustics on sound propagation and perception. The book contains a comprehensive view of room acoustics from the basic theory of room modes to room treatment, sound field playback, measurement, and the psychoacoustics of the perception of spatial audio in rooms.

Jiri loved music and was determined to create the best audio playback from his extensive record collection of classical music. He spent many evenings with friends, colleagues, and students assessing the playback quality of various loudspeakers and hi-fi components that paraded through his living room. He took great joy in hearing his prized B&W 801 loudspeakers almost always come out on top.

Jiri played a prominent role in the Audio Engineering Society and was elected a Fellow of the Audio Engineering Society in 1984. In the AES Jiri was particularly involved in the work of the Technical Committee on Acoustics and Sound Reinforcement and in committees on electroacoustics topics. Jiri also helped organize workshops, tutorials, and sessions on small room acoustics, active control of sound fields, and signal processing in addition to presenting many research papers at sessions on these topics. Jiri was also on the review board for the *JAES* for many years.

Jiri was also greatly involved with many other professional societies. His home society was the Acoustical Society of America which he joined in 1960 and where he

served or chaired many of its professional committees such as Medals and Awards, Architectural Acoustics, Noise, Publication Policy, and others. He was elected Fellow to the Society in 1970 was the president of the Society from 1994 to 1995. For his contributions to acoustics and its education Jiri was awarded the Gold Medal by the Society, the most distinguished award given by the Acoustical Society of America.

In 1999 Jiri organized the first joint international meeting of the Acoustical Society of America with the European Acoustical Association that was held in Berlin, Germany. This was the largest meeting on acoustics that took place in the previous century. In addition, he organized or co-organized seven national and international meetings on active control of sound, and symposia on sound intensity technique for industry.

Jiri was also active in the Institute of Noise Control Engineering, where he served as president from 1986 to 1987, among other functions. The Czech Acoustical Society elected him an Honorary Member of the Society. He was a member of the Acoustical Society of Japan and the New York Academy of Sciences.

Jiri was an excellent professor and mentor to his many students. Although his lectures typically ended with chalk boards full of equations, he taught by focusing on the underlying physics of a problem and explained what the equations were representing from a physically intuitive perspective. He was always interested in making sure that students were learning and thinking beyond the equations. Jiri also was diligent in helping students in their careers, both before and after graduation.

He will be greatly missed by the all his students, colleagues, friends, and his entire family.

**Gary W. Elko**  
mh acoustics LLC

**Sabih Hayek**  
Pennsylvania State University

**Mendel Kleiner**  
Chalmers University