



Photo: J. Peter Kiedel

Dr. Hunt at May 1970 Awards Banquet. From left, Dr. Beranek, Mrs. Hunt, Dr. Knudsen

FREDERICK VINTON HUNT, Honorary Member of the Audio Engineering Society and President of AES in 1969/70, died in Buffalo of a heart attack on April 21 at the age of 67. He was attending a meeting of the Acoustical Society of which he also had been top officer in 1951/52.

Revered and loved by fellow audio engineers and acousticians, Dr. Hunt was widely respected in academic and government circles for his brilliant and innovative work in a variety of fields related to physics, communication engineering and underwater sound. Until he moved to La Jolla, California in 1970, his base of operation, since enrollment at Harvard in 1925 (following two Bachelor's degrees—arts and electrical engineering—from Ohio State), had been the University, where he was both Gordon McKay Professor of Applied Physics and Rumford Professor of Physics.

Dr. Hunt spoke simply of three periods of an impressive professional life: The first period, before 1941, when he did things himself; then the war years when he did things through a large research organization; and the years since the war, when he stimulated his students to do things. Among the "things" accomplished, often in conjunction with colleagues and/or graduate students, were breakthroughs in new room acoustics, regulated power supply, lightweight phonograph pickups and reproduction equipment, and notably, during World War II, in sonar. Developments from Hunt's underwater sound research, are credit-

ed with "knocking out enough enemy submarines to attenuate that major threat," and are the base of our present-day sonar systems.

At Harvard, a formidable number of doctorates were achieved under Ted Hunt's tutelage in the very special atmosphere of Cruft Laboratory. Of the nearly 40 students to earn doctoral degrees with the inspiration and assistance of Dr. Hunt, the first, his research assistant Leo L. Beranek, knew him as teacher, friend and colleague. The following brief excerpts from Dr. Beranek's observations and recollections of Hunt, made upon presentation of the Acoustical Society's Gold Medal in 1969, give a special insight into his life and career. According to Beranek:

"Hunt's progress through graduate studies did not trace the shortest line. His propensity for diversionary interests and his non-conformity to academic rituals resulted in his submitting in 1934 two doctoral theses, one to the Physics Department and the other to the Engineering School. Both theses were accepted, and his name placed on tentative lists of degree recipients. (However, he became a victim of the rule, one man, one degree, and chose to settle for the PhD in Physics.)

"At Harvard, he worked amid a spectacular array of physicists and engineers and became known at seminars for his superb demonstrations and his novel ideas.

"By 1937, Assistant Professor Hunt was ensconced in a large corner room

in Cruft Laboratory with hundreds of square feet of table and cabinet space. Those tables were known as 'Hunt's junk heap,' for they housed a bizarre collection of electronic components and electroacoustic equipment. Dr. Hunt never seemed to tire, and his steady optimism made each day the exciting adventure that was to become a secret of his success with graduate students."

Among awards and honors given to Ohio-born Ted Hunt were Harvard's Honorary Doctor of Science degree, 1945; Presidential Medal of Merit, 1947; Pioneers of Underwater Acoustics Medal, Acoustical Society of America, 1965; Emile Berliner Award, Audio Engineering Society, 1954 and Potts Memorial Award, 1965; and the Navy's Distinguished Public Service Medal in 1970. He was a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; Acoustical Society of America; American Physical Society; and Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers; an Honorary Member of the Audio Engineering Society; and belonged to Phi Beta Kappa, Tau Beta Pi, Sigma Xi and Eta Kappa Nu. Since 1970, he had been active as research associate of the Marine Physical Laboratory of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography of the University of California at San Diego.

Dr. Hunt leaves his wife, the former Katherine Beckingham, a graduate architect who shared the fulfillment of a brilliant career, and a son, Thomas, a physicist at the University of Michigan.