

## IN MEMORIAM

It is with a sense of deep personal grief that I write about my friend and colleague **Warren Birkenhead**. In some ways Warren was like an older brother to me. We shared many interests over the years. It was 1947 while he was stationed at Atsugi Air Base that we first became friends. After his stint with the U.S. Navy he returned to his job with Capitol Records. When King Records of Japan entered into a contract with Capitol, Warren returned to Tokyo representing Capitol. Pressing of long-playing records had just begun and Warren introduced most of the new equipment and technology. Capitol Records' high-fidelity demonstration record that Warren brought along to Japan created a sensation; it was even more exciting than the response at the time stereo disks or the CD was introduced.

When Warren returned to the U.S., he met with C. J. LeBel, who had been the first president of the AES, and later secretary and chief of the sections committee of the society. He talked with him about the prospects of starting a Japan Section. When he went to Tokyo several friends including Mr. Wada of King Records, Mr. Ibuka and Mr. Tada of Sony, Mr. Hiyama of Toyo Kasei, Mr. Takahashi of Radio Gijitsu, Mr. Hayashi and myself formed a steering committee to establish a Japan Section. Supported and assisted by Warren's enthusiasm and competence, the Japan Section was formally recognized by the AES Board of Governors in 1951.

Mr. Ibuka, founder and past board chairman of Sony, was the first AES member from Japan to attend an AES convention. After listening to his report, a group of high-fidelity enthusiasts including most of the steering committee established the Japan Audio Society. When the first audio show in Japan was held in December of 1952 most of the big companies of today were not among the 30 or so exhibitors.

Members of the AES and the JAS who knew Warren feel indebted to him for triggering the start of the activities which contributed to the de-

velopment of the audio industry in Japan. Moreover, he created a bridge of friendship between local and overseas members.

All the members of the Japan Section pay our respects to Warren and feel deep gratitude to him. We hope to sustain his spirit of warm friendship and exchange of new ideas and technologies by contributing to the development of our mutually common field of audio engineering.

JOHN H. NAKAMURA  
Japan Section



We were indeed saddened to learn of the death of **Warren Birkenhead** 1984 August 18. Mr. Birkenhead was one of the people along with John Nakamura and Masuo Hayashi who spearheaded the formation of the Japan Section of the AES.

Born in 1907 in Benton, Illinois, Birkenhead was active in audio, broadcasting, and especially recording for most of his life. A charter member of the society, he was with NBC radio in the 30s and with CBS in the 40s. He served in the U.S. Navy as a Lieutenant Commander until 1945 when he returned to civilian life as a chief engineer of Capitol Records in Los Angeles. He again served in the Navy during the Korean conflict, then returned to civilian life in Japan where he developed a love for the country and its life-style. He became associated with many audio engineers in Japan and became active in the expanding electronics industry. Without question, his enthusiasm and devotion to his work in Japan was responsible for the growth of the AES internationally. The society was fortunate to have a member of Birkenhead's organizational ability and dedication in the early years of its development. For the last 12 years he and his wife Mary lived in Hawaii.

Birkenhead was also a member of the IRE (now IEEE), the SMPTE and the Hollywood section of the Sapphire Group.

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