



Louis R. Burroughs
July 29, 1903–January 13, 1986

Lake Havasu City, Arizona—To the rest of the world, this little desert oasis is remembered—if it is remembered at all—as the unlikely place where London Bridge went into retirement. But to those in the smaller world of professional audio, Lake Havasu City's claim to fame is as the retirement home of "Mr. Microphone."

Of course, that title could only have belonged to Lou Burroughs, who spent the last years of his life here, a long way from the gas station basement in South Bend, Indiana, where he and partner Al Kahn started a little radio service shop in 1927. In those days, Lou and Al would build a few microphones incorporating one of Lou's hum-bucking coils, then hop a motorcycle and make the rounds.

Years later, Lou was still out there making his rounds, selling his microphones. Or perhaps he wasn't selling them, for he was often heard suggesting the use of just one microphone instead of a forest of them. Strange talk for a manufacturer, but it worked, and soon in recording and broadcast studios everywhere, to say Electro-Voice and microphone in the same breath was to be redundant.

Lou's lectures were often hard to forget, as anyone who attended a demonstration of the E-V 664, the Buchanan Hammer, can testify. Lou

would show up with a few mics, a piece of wood, and a nail. When the talk got around to the matter of durability, he'd unplug the 664, use it to pound the nail home, and then get on with the talk, having more than made his point.

In grudging recognition of his effectiveness, one critic referred to a talk by Lou as "Dr. Burroughs' Medicine Show." The name stuck, and helped Lou sell even more microphones. And under the guise of entertainment, Lou could be depended upon to sneak in lots of helpful hints, and the occasional jolt to the competition.

In the very late '50s, he announced that E-V was going to concentrate on dynamic mics only: "We found the dynamic was equal to the best condenser in response and superior to the majority." Needless to say, not everyone agreed, but that never phased Lou. At least everyone listened—and asked questions.

One question kept recurring: Why don't you write a book? So he did. He called it "Microphones: Design and Application" and *Stereo* magazine called it "the best text on microphones we've ever seen." For some thirty years Lou also wrote and edited Electro-Voice's "Microphone Facts" newsletter, in which many E-V products made their debut.

Lou also used his newsletter to pass on interesting microphone case histories and regular encouragements to all readers to join the Audio Engineering Society. A member himself since 1960, Lou served as Central Vice President in 1961 and was awarded a society fellowship in 1967.

The fellowship was not the first recognition of Lou's accomplishments. Years earlier, a citation from the Secretary of War marked his World War II achievement of developing the first noise-canceling microphone. Other accomplishments included the creation of Acoustalloy, the introduction of the first lavalier microphone, an Academy Award for developing the cardiline microphone, and the awarding of some 27 electroacoustic patents.

By 1960, Electro-Voice had long since outgrown its basement operation and was well settled in its Buchanan, Michigan, home. Lou was now vice president of the broadcast and recording equipment division in an expanding operation. Later he became vice president, professional products. But he didn't forget how it had all started. According to E-V president Al Kahn, "Lou operates his division like a small business within our organization of a thousand people." And that's how it was until his retirement.

Even after that, Lou could still be found at trade shows and conventions, even participating in a medicine show every now and then, much to the delight of his many student-friends, colleagues, and admirers.

But no more, for after a long illness Louis R. Burroughs died in Lake Havasu City on Monday, 1986 January 13. A company bulletin states that he was associated with Electro-Voice, Inc. since its inception in 1927. To many of us, Lou Burroughs was Electro-Voice.

Lou is survived by his wife Marguerite and by countless engineers who are just a little bit smarter for having known him. And his monument may be found in every recording and broadcast studio in the country, if not in the world.

JOHN WORAM