



Harry McCune
1930-1996

Harry McCune, lively and enterprising renowned audio engineer and chairman of the board of McCune Audio-Visual Video, one of the unsung legends of the audio industry, died suddenly of a massive heart attack on the 11th of April 1996. He collapsed in the lobby of his beloved Bohemian Club in San Francisco, California.

A native of San Francisco, McCune began his career as a teenager in his father's sound company. Harry's life paralleled the development of sound and audio for radio, television and the performing arts: from the 1930s when Harry and his father, Harry Sr., broadcast live big bands over the radio from ballrooms around San Francisco to North Beach and the heyday of the Purple Onion, to the era of rock and roll when he literally invented most of the concepts of the modern day live performance sound

systems. During the Korean War he trained in psychological warfare at the University of Kansas and developed mobile radio broadcasting units that were later used worldwide. He then returned to oversee the expansion of the family firm, which now boasts some 300 employees with offices throughout California and the U.S.

A shy man, Harry was an innovator and an inspiration. Bill Cosby, Barbara Streisand, Frank Sinatra—the list goes on and on of people who knew him personally and depended on him for sound advice. From the Hollywood Bowl to the San Francisco Symphony to the sound system for the O. J. Simpson trial, from AES conventions to the NAB Conventions, and many others, Harry McCune Audio/Visual Video was everywhere in this country and around the world whenever and wherever anyone wanted to “have it done right.”

Taciturn and laconic, Harry had a dry wit that was legend among all who knew him. If he was expected to laugh at a joke, he would remain completely stern, pretending to wait for the funny part. It was enough to completely frustrate any joke teller. He enjoyed doing it to me. When I'd tell him a funny story, he would ask: “Now tell me when it's over so I'll know when to laugh.” It became a challenge to sneak in a funny and have Harry burst into hearty laughter. Bill Cosby, who met Harry during Cosby's early days at the Purple Onion finally banned Harry from his

shows because he would sit, dead pan in the front row, daring Cosby to make him laugh.

Kindhearted and philanthropic, Harry created and supported an orphanage in Heidelberg, Germany, for abandoned children of U.S. servicemen. He also provided low or no-cost audio-visual systems to volunteer and charitable organizations.

On the commercial side, he helped develop innovations that became industry standards. Just a few of them include the triamplified loudspeaker, slider potentiometer consoles, bi-amplified monitor loudspeaker systems, and large stadium loudspeakers. He designed touring sound systems for leading entertainers and personally mixed their most important shows. Under his direction, McCune Sound expanded and is now one of the leading stage companies.

An honorary member of the AES, Harry was facilities chairman at the society's 97th convention in San Francisco in 1994. He was also active in civic affairs, a supporter of the San Francisco Convention Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn, of San Francisco; a son, Allan, of Burlingame, a daughter, Sue, of Santa Rosa; a sister, Pat; and six grandchildren, as well as many friends. All of us who knew him will miss him greatly. He was a good friend and a gentleman as well as a gentle man. Until we meet again...

Your friend,
Leo de Gar Kulka

Eugen Eduard Spörri died on October 10, 1995. He was born in 1935 in Wettingen, a village near Regensdorf, Switzerland. As a young man, Spörri studied commercial management.

In 1957 he was employed by EMT

Wilhelm Franz GmbH, where his ability to speak German, French, and Italian fluently in addition to English was a great asset. From 1962 he was in charge of the export department. Some years later, a joint venture was set up in 1971 between EMT and the

Studer Company under the name Studer Franz AG, with Spörri as director. The company became the Studer International AG in 1974 under Spörri's capable leadership. Many Studer subsidiaries were established in various European countries

In Memoriam



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and throughout the world.

The year was 1975 when the 50th convention was in view. Within the young European AES organization future plans for the upcoming convention were in progress. An AES delegation including myself drove up to Zurich with the intention of asking Willi Studer to serve as chairman for the 53rd convention in Zurich in 1976. Studer, however, declined the proposal because he was too busy building the new factory in Regensdorf. He recommended Eugen Spörri as an excellent candidate for the job.

During these months of preparation for the 53rd I became acquainted with Spörri and found him to be a charming and efficient person. He solved organizational problems smoothly. Under his supervision, the awards banquet was superb. It was at that banquet that Willi Studer was awarded the Silver Medal and Georg Neumann the Gold Medal.

After the convention I had many conversations and communications with Spörri, who was always friendly and courteous. He left Studer at the end of 1992 because of ill health. We were shocked and grieved to learn of his death. For all of us in Europe, now in its 26th year of AES conventions, we will remember him as a fine and charming gentleman.

Herman A. O. Wilms
AES Europe Region