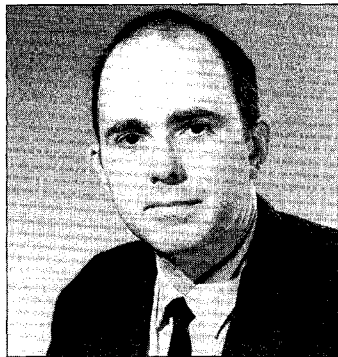


In Memoriam



Jon R. Sank
1934-1998

We regret to announce the sudden death of **Jon R. Sank**, AES member, on August 25 at his home in Haddonfield, NJ. Jon was well known to the audio community for his many articles on microphone evaluations and history. He wrote for, and served on the editorial boards of, numerous periodicals, including *Audio*, *Sound & Communications*, *Sound & Vibration*, *Aviation Consumer* and the *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society*. As long time secretary/treasurer, Jon was the motivating force behind the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Acoustical Society of America for the last two decades.

Jon received his B.S.E.E. from Drexel Institute in 1957 and did graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania in mathematics and physics. He was hired by RCA where he worked in the acoustical laboratories in Camden, NJ from 1957 through 1970. His focus there was on network television-oriented microphones, such as the BK-12 lavalier, for which he was the primary inventor. This transformerless microphone, which used a Swiss-style four-layer winding, was unique at the time because of its small size and because of its built-in predistortion in order to compensate for human throat characteristics. Jon was also the primary designer of the BK-11 bidirectional microphone and the BK-15 miniature unidirectional ribbon microphone. Although the latter never went into production, it was demonstrated suc-

cessfully at an NAB show. The BK-14 and BK-16 were also essentially his since they incorporated the BK-12 elements into a stick (hand-held) housing.

One of his responsibilities at RCA was for quality assurance for the manufacturing of the earlier microphone products. He assured the quality of the BK-5s, 44s and 77s that were still being produced. In later years he reminisced fondly about having performed repair work on Perry Como's road microphones. Those BK-10 microphones were actually based on Harry Olson's design, which used two BK-5s together in a hypercardioid fashion in order to accommodate Como's soft voice. Sank made this concept work by painstakingly handtuning the two ribbons to the same frequency. Other famous clients included President Eisenhower, who required a special customized lectern and President Johnson, who did not like multiple microphones showing so Jon placed two BK-6Bs inside of a BK-1 body at the suggestion of RCA's marketing department. At RCA Jon also helped maintain the anechoic, reverberant and audiometric acoustical test facilities, and he developed phono pickups and amplifiers for broadcast and professional audio applications.

Following his departure from RCA Jon worked for Control Data Corporation on noise control for tape and card equipment and on the design of magnetic heads. He then moved on to establish his own business, Cross Country Consultants of Haddonfield, NJ. He worked primarily in noise abatement, employed as an expert by a wide variety of clients including Goodrich, DuPont, M & M Mars, Sun Oil, OSHA and various schools and municipalities. Because of his special interest in radio throughout his life, he enjoyed the sound work he did for radio and television stations, particularly WWDB-FM and WHYY-TV and FM. He was also recognized for his work in church sound reinforcement with permanent installations at the Bryn Athyn Cathedral and the Haddonfield United Methodist Church. His professional affiliations included national member-

ship in ASA, AES, NCAC and Eta Kappa Nu. On March 11, 1997 at the 50th anniversary celebration of the AES in New York City, Jon was honored along with such notables as Bob Moog and Guy Woodward as a "living legend" for his pioneering work.

Jon's many hobbies included astronomy and aviation. As a private pilot he tinkered with direction finding, altitude and communication devices. He designed and built the Greenmount Theater in the basement of his home and would entertain friends with a monthly selection of classic movie presentations. During intermissions, many attendees would peruse his collection of audio and TV paraphernalia.

Through the years many individuals and organizations relied on his advice and knowledge. He was always happy to hear about an audio or acoustics-related question. If he didn't know the answer, he could point you to a reference on the subject or would generously loan you a piece of equipment to use.

John Wiggins of Community Light & Sound recalled how their early outdoor loudspeaker propagation measurement system had been calibrated by Jon using his own National Bureau of Standards Western Electric 640AA microphone and spherical sound source. In Jon's usual meticulous way he assured the accuracy of Community's results. Jim Kogen remembered meeting Jon around 1964 when Shure and RCA worked together on a tone arm and some cartridges. According to Kogen, "Jon was an excellent engineer. I consulted with him many times. I always received an honest answer even if it was one I didn't want to hear. He evaluated many of our company's products. If he said there was a problem, I knew we had a problem. If he said it was okay, I knew we had a winner. He never modified his view because we were old friends." As a friend, colleague and resource to the audio and acoustics community, Jon Sank will be greatly missed. He is survived by his wife, Sandra, four children and five grandchildren.

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