

In Memoriam



Harry L. Bryant in Studio B at Radio Recorders in 1947.

Harry L. Bryant, AES fellow and life member, died in Long Beach, FL, in December 2004. He was 94 years old. A former president of the society (1959-1960), Bryant was born in South Carolina and later moved to California.

At the age of 21 Bryant was bent on a singing career. He then became fascinated by the technological aspects of how a voice is recorded and realized there was more work in that area than in singing.

His broadcasting career began in 1937 at KHJ as a sound mixer. While working there he married. In 1942 he joined NBC as a sound mixer, working on the "Jack Benny Show," the "Bob Hope Show," and "Amos and Andy." Those were the golden days of radio. During one of Jack Benny's shows Bryant invented his first gadget: a foot switch gain control for reducing the P.A. sound volume to prevent feedback. He also used a simple equalizer on remote broadcasts to reduce feedback and permit a louder sound level from the P.A. system. His work at NBC as a sound mixer was established.

After two years he left to become chief engineer and co-partner of Radio Recorders. There he was part of

the team that built an echo chamber and incorporated his idea for echo send. Bryant recalled that in those days one had to build most of the equipment rather than just shop around and buy it. He recorded musicals, comedies, and variety shows for radio and film studios. He made records for Doris Day, Elvis Presley, and Louis Armstrong. The studio prospered for almost 50 years.

Bryant said his first love was mixing and working with big bands. When the music industry began to change, their large studios were no longer needed. Smaller groups were recording and big band music was not popular. Bryant said that Radio Recorders strength was in its equipment, personnel, and service. In 1963 he left the company and became an engineering consultant until his retirement in 1985.

Among his accolades, Bryant was recognized by the Hollywood-based Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters for his early work in sound reproduction for live and recorded programs. He won the Diamond Circle Award, which is given to members over 79 years old for pioneering achievements in radio or television broadcasting. Bryant is survived by his wife, Alice, and a daughter, Sharon Brown.