

Obituaries

David Clark (1941–2018)



My mentor, critic, and long-time friend, David L. Clark, has gone. He will long be remembered as a giant in the audio world. He made a huge impact on

my life and the lives of many others. His contributions to the science of audio were substantial indeed.

David was an AES governor and authored and coauthored at least 16 papers for AES (an AES E-library search of his name showed 266 matches) and several for SAE. He headed the Loudspeaker and Headphone Technical Committee for the AES.

He was a contributor and a very active member of SMWTMS, the “Southeastern Michigan Woofer and Tweeter Marching Society.” He was responsible for over a hundred programs for them. He authored more articles than I could count. As I recall, he was also a member of the Boston Audio Society. He and his wife Mary frequently attended the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and other venues as well.

Dave introduced me to a live performance of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus’ (or was it UC Davis’?) “Carmina Burana,” and their “O Fortuna” made my hair stand up.

Dave authored articles for publications, including many for audio and radio-TV magazines. His style was not without humor. When describing folks who preferred tuned port vs. infinite baffles, he referred to “vented boxers and infinite bafflers.”

He championed against “audiophilism.” He offered a challenge to a vacuum tube amplifier supplier who said such-and-such high-end amp was far superior to any transistor amp.

Dave took a Crown solid-state amp and adjusted for EQ and volume for a match. He noted that the output impedance of

the tube amp was notably higher than that of the solid state amp, but was not allowed by the company to add a resistor to the Crown’s output. Hooked to Electro-Voice Patrician loudspeakers, it was displayed at an AES convention to a large group of listeners. Despite large swings in the speaker’s impedance and resulting spectral differences, no one could hear the difference indicating which was the “better” amp. He had a similar outcome when demonstrating premium vs. “ordinary” audio cables in the company owner’s home.

David came to Delphi in 1987 and brought science and new techniques to our audio team. Triple notch filters (early EQ), new concepts for speakers, the DUMAX large-signal parameter measurement system, Hi-2, a high-frequency distortion-measurement system, and his well-known PTF vehicle and home audio measurement machine. His Listening Technology and the LiT scoresheet has been used thousands of times for car audio evaluation.

Dave knew what the automotive audio world needed and provided that in a clever scientific, and productive manner.

He made an especially wise choice in his life by marrying his wife Mary. She is an incredible woman, standing by his side, allowing him to put his audio equipment all around the house and cook those incredible dinners. He could not have done better.

I owe DLC so much. He has given me a much more scientific approach to the development and evaluation of audio components and systems. And he has been a friend. I will miss him.

Richard Stroud

From Alan Trevena

I don’t think it’s a step too far to say I owe my career to Dave. He instilled a rigorous questioning of convention without bias or emotion in his approach that I carry with me to this day.

He was one of the greats, and will be missed.

From Barry Moskowitz

I rarely make comment, but for this, I will. Dave was one of the true acoustical intellects I have known in my career. I met him many years (~30) ago and was always impressed by his comprehensive understanding.

It is quite sad for me to hear this today. Our field lost a great contributor.

No question, he will be missed.

From Sean Thompson

If I look back at snapshots of my career, Dave’s picture appears in numerous places on my timeline.

I met Dave in my first week of work at Ford Dunton in 1995. As I was tasked with both technical support and attending his Listening Technology seminar, I spent more time with him in my first week than with my new colleagues. There we used parts of his methods for our evaluation processes. I also worked more closely with him during our joint time at Alpine.

Dave has been a key person from the very start of my journey in automotive audio, and through him I learned not just about some of technical sides of it but also about the business itself, its people, and its history.

R.I.P Dave. As colleague and a friend you will be missed.

“This is a voice recording, on both channels...”

From Alfred J. Svobodnik

On behalf of TC-AA I’d like to express our deepest sadness that one of our greats has passed away, and send my warmest regards to David’s family and friends.