

# Obituaries

## Harry Hirsch (1929–2019)



In the past when someone told Harry Hirsch “You’re history,” he took it as a compliment to his role as Chair of the AES Historical Committee. At 6:05 AM on Thursday,

February 14 this irreplaceable and occasionally irreverent musician, recording studio owner, engineer, producer, educator, and technology guru passed into history himself.

Beginning his career in 1942 as a 13-year-old drummer in the Catskills, Harry Hirsch was gifted with a natural ability to master new technology. His talents as a recording and mastering engineer inspired him to design, build, and administer a number of world-class studios in NYC. As founder and past president of MediaSound and Soundmixers, and as a co-designer of GRP Records, and SoundTrack/NY studios, he hosted sessions for Frank Sinatra, Barbara Streisand, Stevie Nicks, Stevie Wonder, The Who, The Bee Gees, Judy Collins, Meatloaf, and many other legendary stars.

An early proponent of digital technology, Harry served as re-issue producer for 10 Duke Ellington CD’s and collaborated with Mercer Ellington on 10 more. In 1981 he was appointed Dean of the Audio Arts Program for NY’s Center for The Media Arts. That same year he was named an Adjunct Professor at NYU where he lectured for the Music Technology Program.

In 1994 Harry Hirsch created Digi-Rom Inc., an innovative NYC-based Audio CD, CD Rom, DVD production/replication firm and vinyl mastering house, which he sold in 2004. In 2005 he and renowned

engineer Irv Joel cochaired the Audio Engineering Society’s 119th Convention Historical Committee. Harry went on to serve as AES Convention Historical Committee Chair in 2007 and 2009. In 2011 he was presented with the AES Fellowship Award in recognition of his over 50 years of pioneering work in the recording industry. He also served two terms as First Vice President of the New York Chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (The Grammys).

“The range and depth of AES Historical Events was impressive, but not surprising, considering Harry Hirsch’s considerable expertise,” remarked AES president-elect and frequent convention cochair Agnieszka Roginska. “A long-time AES member, Harry worked closely with elder statesmen Irv Joel, Bill Wray, and John Chester on our indispensable AES Oral History Project. He edited nearly 100 hour-long DVD interviews, including in-depth Q&A’s with industry doyens, Les Paul and Phil Ramone. Harry Hirsch was an irreplaceable fixture at AES conventions and he has made an indelible contribution to our organization,” Roginska said.

Meetings with Harry Hirsch often began with a warm handshake and his irreverent greeting, “Frieda’s boy from The Bronx!” A loving husband, father of sons Bruce and Marc, and grandfather of Paige and Garret, he is survived by Doris Baran Hirsch, his partner at Digi-Rom, and wife of 64 years.

Howard Sherman

## Lawrence E. Knees (1928–2018)

Lawrence Edward Knees, a charter member of the AES, passed away July 9, 2018 at home in Asheville, NC.



He is survived by his wife Janice, son Geoffrey and daughter Deborah, and was predeceased by a son, James.

Larry was born January 30, 1928, in Fairfield, CT, to

Edward and Flora Knees. His early interest in electronics led to work designing and installing high-end custom sound systems before being drafted into the Army, where he quickly became an electronics instructor, and was later involved in testing captured V1 and V2 rockets with the 1st Antiaircraft Artillery and Guided Missile Battalion at Fort Bliss, TX.

After discharge from the Army he was employed by magnetics manufacturer Reeves Soundcraft in Springdale, CT, and it was at Reeves where he worked with his future mother-in-law, who brought him home to meet Janice, leading to their marriage of 62 years

At Reeves, and later Ferrodynamics Corp in Lodi, NJ, Magnetic Media in Mamaroneck, NY, and Audio Devices in Glenbrook, CT, Larry spent his career in R&D and management of new products and processes.

Following the acquisition of Audio Devices by Capitol/EMI, Larry retired to indulge his life-long desire to be self employed, buying a general store in rural Pleasant Valley, CT.

After fifteen years in “the valley,” Larry and Jan followed son Jim to settle in Asheville NC, where he was active with church, choral, and other groups, including Lions, Meals on Wheels, and as a volunteer at a local radio station.

He is sorely missed.

Geoffrey Knees