



Leo Beranek, a 2003 National Medal of Science recipient and longtime member of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA), died in Westwood, MA, on October 10, 2016, almost a month following his 102nd birthday. His remarkable life and career were highlighted in a special Fall 2014 issue of *Acoustics Today*

(see <http://acousticstoday.org/issues/2014AT/Fall2014/index.html>).

Leo leaves his wife Gabriella, sons James K. Beranek and Thomas B. Haynes, and granddaughter Antonia Hsu Haynes. He was predeceased by his wife of 42 years Phyllis Knight Beranek.

Leo graduated in 1936 from Cornell College (Iowa) with a BA degree in physics and mathematics. He received his DSc degree from Harvard in 1940 in acoustics. His first papers in *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* were published in 1940 when he was 26 years old; his last was published in 2016 when he was 101.

Leo remained at Harvard during World War II as director of two laboratories: first, the Electro-Acoustic Laboratory, which dealt with voice communication in combat vehicles, and second, the Systems Research Laboratory, one of whose missions was to improve the US Navy's ability to combat Japanese kamikaze aircraft attacks.

In 1948, Leo and colleagues formed the acoustical consulting firm Bolt, Beranek, and Newman (BBN). With Leo as president, BBN was ready to tackle its first major project: the acoustics and sound systems in the new United Nations headquarters in New York City. Another major consulting project in the early years of BBN was quieting a new test facility for supersonic jet engines in Cleveland, OH.

In 1965, under Leo's leadership, BBN became a vanguard of the digital age by putting together one of the most advanced

computer software groups in the country, and this group was instrumental in the development of the Internet.

In 1969, after 21 years at BBN, Leo left to become president of Boston Broadcasters, Inc., which took over operation of Channel 5 TV in 1972. The station developed a national reputation as a model for well-run local and regional TV stations. Leo then returned to his first love, music performance acoustics. He consulted on many concert halls, among which was the Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, which was hailed as an "acoustical 'miracle'" on the front page of *The New York Times* (4/18/2000). The Hall is considered one of the five best concert halls acoustically in the world.

Leo published 185 technical papers and 13 books, many of which are discussed in the special issue of *Acoustics Today*.

Leo's first recognition from the ASA was in 1944 when he received the R. Bruce Lindsay Award. Subsequently, Leo was a member of the Executive Council (1944-1947), president (1954-1955), instrumental in establishing the Technical Council structure as it currently exists, and a recipient of the Wallace Clement Sabine Award in 1961. He became an Honorary Fellow in 1994 at age 80. Leo joined the ASA in 1938 and received the first 75th anniversary membership certificate issued by ASA in 2013 when he was 99 years old.

Although Leo has earned kudos as a scientist, teacher, entrepreneur, television executive, philanthropist, and author, he is most reverently remembered by the acoustics community for the tireless support and encouragement he generously gave students and professionals alike. At a special Tribute Session celebrating Leo's 100th birthday in 2014, speaker after speaker shared tales of how Leo was instrumental in helping his or her career. Leo was infallibly thoughtful, prompt (always on time), well organized, and courteous.

Written by:

William J. Cavanaugh, *Email:* wcavanaugh@cavtocci.com

Carl J. Rosenberg, *Email:* crosenberg@acentech.com
