NAB Radio TechCheck

The Weekly NAB Newsletter for Radio Broadcast Engineers

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Tom Silliman and Tony Uyttendaele to Receive 2008 NAB Engineering Achievement Awards

Radio Engineering Achievement Award Winner
Thomas B. Silliman

Tom Silliman is often called a Renaissance man due to his varied passions. But, he is best known for his accomplishments in the field of antenna engineering for the broadcast industry as President of ERI Inc.

Tom began his career as a consultant, working with his father in the engineering firm Silliman & Silliman. In the 1970s he developed a design for what would become the patented ROTOTILLER® antenna – a circularly polarized FM broadcast antenna. Electronics Research Incorporated (ERI), owned by the Sillimans, began manufacturing the ROTOTILLER which rapidly became a popular antenna choice for FM stations in the U.S.

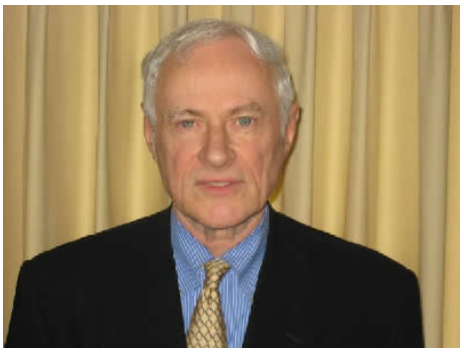
In-Band On-Channel (IBOC) digital broadcasting technology demanded new antenna innovations for broadcasters. Under Tom's leadership, ERI developed a dual feed antenna system designed to accommodate stations' analog and digital transmissions. A noted expert with multi-station transmitter sites is legendary. ERI antenna and combining systems are used at major sites around the country including the recent Four Times Square installation in New York City.

In 2003, building on the strengths of ERI, Tom lead the company in its successful efforts to acquire Andrew Corporation's Broadcast Products Business. Today, ERI is considered one of the world's top suppliers of radio and television transmission components.

You will recognize Tom as the guy on a tower hundreds of feet off the ground in a variety of ERI advertisements – he's an expert climber and tower rigger. He is a friend to many broadcasters, always willing to help solve problems; and Tom takes the time to carefully explain complex RF issues to anyone willing to take the time to learn.

Tom's father, Robert M. Silliman won the NAB Engineering Award for Radio in 1993.

Television Engineering Achievement Award Winner
Antoon (Tony) Uyttendaele



Tony spent 25 years of his career with ABC, Inc., in positions of increasing responsibility. Officially retired in 2000, as Senior Advisor, Science & Technology, he continues to consult for ABC on a part time basis. Preceding employment by ABC; he worked for Harris, RCA (several countries) and PYI Ltd., mostly making broadcast facilities become operational realities worldwide. He was graduated magna cum laude in Engineering from the National Radio and Film Institute in Brussels, Belgium.

Perhaps most noteworthy of Tony's accomplishments is his pivotal and unrelenting role in making 720p a reality, from being an early supporter and promoter of progressive scan formats to final adoption by the ITU

(ITU-R BT.1543) and implementation by several major broadcast networks. Prior to ABC announcing the adoption of the 720p HDTV format for production and transmission, Tony and his engineering colleagues had to convince many equipment manufacturers that they should develop 720p hardware. This they did by visiting all major Japanese broadcast equipment manufacturers as well as some consumer equipment manufacturers. In the process he made dozens of presentations positing the benefits, addressing comments from the skeptics, including convincing the Grand Alliance to change from the original 787.5 to 750 lines. At the same time he prepared, with the help of Panasonic and NTV (Japan), a draft SMPTE document for 720p. This formed the basis for what became SMPTE 296M.

For about 10 years, Tony was the international chairman of the ITU-R Working Party on SNG. This Working Party developed many Recommendations on uniform standards and operating procedures to make SNG practical worldwide. Tony has contributed to the industry in many other ways, as a member/participant of numerous engineering committees such as NAB, MSTV, ATSC, ATTC, FCC ACATS, FCC Advisory Committee on two-degree satellite spacing, CATS/ATRP (MIT), EIA (RS-250B), NABA, IEEE TAB NTDC (New Technology Directions Committee), ITU Task Groups, Working Parties and Study Groups.

For the ABC Television Network, Tony also developed and managed the implementation of the C-Band satellite network distribution system. He designed the uplink facility at ABC's Broadcast Centers in Manhattan and Hollywood and coordinated interference clearance with all the common carriers that share the same frequency band as a requirement to obtain an FCC license. The uplink facility at ABC's Broadcast Center in Manhattan is unique in that it is the only C-Band video uplink in Manhattan.

Tony was also the chairman of the ATSC Specialist Group on Ghost Canceling. After more than three years, studying, evaluating and testing all proposed ghost canceling signals, this activity resulted in the adoption of the ghost canceling (CGR) reference signal standard, subsequently adopted by the FCC. This GCR signal has been widely adopted by countries in addition to the U.S. and is the subject of an ITU-R Recommendation. This technology is still in use today in the U.S. in professional receivers for improving the quality of NTSC translators and repeaters.

The Engineering Achievement Awards will be given at the NAB Show Technology Luncheon on Wednesday April 16, 2008 in the Las Vegas Hilton. The luncheon will be sponsored by Samsung.