



Peter C. Goldmark

Peter Carl Goldmark

1906-1977

By Benjamin B. Bauer

Peter C. Goldmark, a Member of the National Academy of Engineering, President and Director of Research of Goldmark Communications Corporation, and previously for many years Chief Research Executive of Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), died on December 7, 1977. He was widely acknowledged as one of the world's leading electronic inventors and innovators. He was responsible for more than 160 inventions in such fields as acoustics, television, phonograph recording, and film reproduction, which have had an important effect on the development of electronics for entertainment and education.

Prior to founding Goldmark Communications, Dr. Goldmark had the principal responsibilities for research at CBS. Starting in 1936 with two technicians and one room, he built an industrial research laboratory rated as one of the leading electronics and communications research organizations in the world. He retired as President and Director of Research of CBS Laboratories and Vice-President of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., on December 31, 1971.

As the head of Goldmark Communications Corporation, which he founded in January 1972, Dr. Goldmark continued research and development efforts in such fields as cable television, electronic publishing, satellite communications, and many others destined to have a profound effect on society and the quality of life for mankind.

One such project, which he conceived and directed prior to his death, was a national pilot study known as "The New Rural Society" (NRS). Initiated in 1970 by a blue-ribbon panel of experts selected at the request of a Presidential Advisory Committee by the National Academy of Engineering, NRS was a national program dedicated to reduce substantially the critical problems of crime, pollution, narcotics, and overcrowding in large cities by reversing the outmigration trend of people from rural America. The purpose of NRS was to find ways to apply communications technology to correct urban-rural imbalance and to provide Americans for the first time with a choice, whether to live and work in a rural or urban community.

As an inventor, Dr. Goldmark had adhered to a strong personal philosophy—to invent only if society could benefit from the results of invention. Two of his major inventions have been enormously influential and exemplify this philosophy. The long-playing record initiated a worldwide industry, which is now in its thirtieth year. Another innovation—the first practical color television—has brought about the TV color revolution; while his original system, shrunk by modern technology to a fraction of its original size, was used by the Apollo astronauts to bring man's first moon landing into the homes of television viewers everywhere.

Another of Dr. Goldmark's innovations was Electronic Video Recording (EVR), which was instrumental in encouraging parallel efforts of others that have led to video disc technology, currently being vigorously pursued by several companies in the United States and abroad.

Among Peter Goldmark's other important inventions was the first "high-fidelity" packaged, integrated phonograph, which used the volume of air within its enclosures to enhance the quality of sound; a pioneering reverberation generating device for livening the quality of recorded and broadcast music, a "talking-book" phonograph the size of a cigar box capable of four hours of recorded sound on a single seven-inch disc; a "crispensing system" for sharpening television images; a rapid transmission system for recording up to thirty educational TV programs on a one-hour reel

of magnetic tape; a music teaching program; and numerous others. Dr. Goldmark was always applying communication science to the improvement of the quality of mankind.

Peter Carl Goldmark was born in Budapest, Hungary, on December 2, 1906. He studied engineering at the University of Berlin and received a doctorate in physics from the University of Vienna. From 1931 to 1933 he worked on television developments at Pye Radio, Ltd., in Cambridge, England. He joined the Columbia Broadcasting System in 1936 as Chief Engineer of the Television Department and astounded the technical world with his pioneering color tv broadcasts from atop the Chrysler building in 1940. After service with the Radiation Laboratory at Harvard during World War II, he returned to his peacetime pursuits, founding CBS Laboratories and becoming its President in 1954.

He was a scientific activist, a Fellow and Life Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, a Fellow of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, a Fellow of the Audio Engineering Society, a Fellow of the British Television Society, a Fellow of the Franklin Institute, a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a member of numerous other scientific organizations. He was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1967, to the National Academy of Sciences in 1972, and to the Connecticut Academy of Sciences and Engineering in 1976. He was a Trustee of the Connecticut Educational Telecommunications Corporation and a Visiting Professor at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School in Medical Electronics and of Fairfield University in Communications Technology.

Dr. Goldmark always has been active in the cause of human rights and the betterment of mankind. He has served as a chairman of numerous civic programs, including the Urban Coalition and the antipoverty agency. Outstanding among his accomplishments for minority groups was the spearheading of a nationally recognized rehabilitation and training program for some 500 low- and middle-income families of Stamford's Southfield Village. As Chairman of the National Academy of Engineering Panel on Urban Problems he sparked the concept of the "New Rural Soci

ety," which calls for the imaginative use of telecommunications to revitalize rural towns and stem the outmigration of people from rural to urban areas.

Peter C. Goldmark received wide recognition for his scientific and humanitarian efforts. Among the twenty-three awards he received are the Morris Liebmann Memorial Prize for Electronic Research (1946); the Vladimir K. Zworykin Prize for Television Technology (1961); the National Urban Service Award "for his efforts in the War on Poverty" (1968); the David Sarnoff Gold Medal Award "for outstanding scientific contribution to the Advancement of Television Technology" (1969); the Elliott Cresson Medal, Franklin Institute, "for his many outstanding contributions to the Field of Electronics, and particularly with respect to the development of the long-playing record, a practical color television system and the home video playback system" (1969); the Carnegie-Mellon Institute Medal "for continuing leadership and contribution to the Betterment of Science for Mankind" (1972); and the National Medal of Science, which was bestowed upon him in 1977 only a few days before his death. Among the honorary degrees awarded to him were the Doctorate of Humane Letters from Dartmouth College, Doctorate of Science from Fairfield University, and Doctorate of Engineering from Polytechnic Institute of New York.

Peter C. Goldmark was a man who always gave and demanded from his associates total dedication to science and society, who inspired enthusiasm in his colleagues, and confidence in his sponsors. And with all this he was a dedicated citizen, a talented musician, a fine family man, and a warm and sensitive human being. His death was a great loss to science and to society. His contributions will long be remembered.

