

In Memoriam Paul W. Shumate

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In Memoriam

Paul W. Shumate



(1942–2019)

WE at the JOURNAL OF LIGHTWAVE TECHNOLOGY (JLT) are deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. Paul Shumate on March 2, 2019 at age 77 of ALS. Paul was an optical R&D pioneer, and lent his stature to the establishment of JLT in 1983. Paul was a Charter Member on the IEEE Steering and the IEEE-OSA Coordinating Committees that govern JLT. He was an indispensable volunteer that kept the JLT machinery running in those early days before anyone knew that JLT would survive. He was the second Chairman of the IEEE Steering Committee (1987) that oversees JLT operations. From then forward he served continuously in Committee Officer positions, with multiple terms as either Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. We will remember him for his energetic volunteer work in crafting and helping update the Letters of Agreement for both Committees. Because of his efforts in coordinating the seven sponsoring IEEE Societies and the OSA, JLT functions as a viable co-sponsored journal. Perhaps even more memorable was his work as Treasurer for the Steering Committee in providing insight into the finances for JLT in order to establish strategies that have kept JLT not only financially sound, but profitable, thereby enabling new initiatives such as expanded number of JLT Special Issues and community outreach with web presence. In the past decade, Paul was able to use his knowledge as former IEEE Photonics Society Executive Director to help address needed updates to the Letters of Agreement, and to identify the changing nature of revenue sources in the evolving environment of research publications.

Paul's service to JLT can be put into better perspective by looking at his history of extraordinary service to IEEE and the IEEE Lasers & Electro-Optics Society (LEOS)-now IEEE Photonics Society. Paul's volunteer service to LEOS was second-to-none, for which he received the 1995 LEOS Distinguished Service Award. Among his activities, he was the VP of Publications, founding Editor-in-Chief of IEEE Photonics Technology Letters (PTL), Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE Journal of Selected Topics in Quantum Electronics, and General Co-Chair of the Conference on Optical Fiber Communications (OFC). He was appointed as Executive Director of LEOS, serving from 1999 to 2006. Under his enthusiastic leadership and attention to detail, Paul steered LEOS into the new millennium. Here he guided four technical journals, directed numerous national and international scientific conferences, and led the Society's financial planning. One of Paul's biggest challenges was managing LEOS' budget. Lightwave technology was at the epicenter of the 2000-2001 technology bubble-and-bust, and LEOS went from being flush with money to having negative budgets. Yet Paul assured the IEEE Finance Committee that he would put LEOS back in the black by 2007. Amazingly, he accomplished this feat two years earlier than he had predicted, achieving a positive actual finance sheet for 2005. He watched LEOS' (and then later, JLT's) money as if it was his own, shaving dollars here-and-there in such a way so as not to reduce any critical member benefits. His attention to detail no doubt was also related to his love for restoring old Corvettes.

The foundation for Paul's volunteer activities, however, was his very distinguished technical and managerial career before joining the IEEE Staff in 1999. He was internationally recognized as a technical leader in many fields, most notably being pre-eminent in Fiber-to-the-X. Paul held prominent positions at AT&T Bell Laboratories and then

Bellcore/Telcordia Technologies. At Bell Labs, Murray Hill, NJ, Paul led pioneering R&D work on optical subsystems used in Bell System network products including fiber access, terrestrial and submarine transmission systems, and optical data links for electronic switching systems. Later, he retired from Telcordia as Chief Scientist and Assistant General Manager, Advanced Network Systems, with responsibilities for research on fiber access (FTTX) and DSL (ADSL, VDSL), including reliability and powering systems. For his contributions, Paul received the Telephony Vision Award and the IEEE Edwin H. Armstrong Award.

Paul had over 125 technical publications, three book chapters, and gave hundreds of conference presentations and short courses. He is a Life Fellow of the IEEE, a Bellcore Fellow, a member of the Optical Society of America, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi and Sigma Pi Sigma. Paul received his Bachelor of Science (BS) in Physics from the College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA, and the PhD in Physics in 1968 from the University of Virginia.

On a more personal level, new ideas and environments were always opportunities to Paul, and he rarely saw a new scenario as a threat. He was the master of finding a win-win scenario so that all involved parties could benefit. Perhaps the best example of this attitude was the manner in which Paul interacted as LEOS Executive Director and as JLT representative with key sister societies within and outside IEEE (e.g., Communications Society, OSA, and SPIE). The leaders of these societies held Paul in great esteem for his openness, fairness, insight, and integrity. They trusted him since he was always looking for the approach that would benefit all parties involved, especially the society members and JLT readers. Indeed, his personal commitment to service was such that, even in late 2018, he fully participated in Committee meetings that would determine the course for JLT for the next half-decade.

All of us involved in JLT are indebted to Paul for his service to JLT, IEEE, and OSA. We will miss him and will not forget this wonderful person who has served our community so very well.

JOHN N. LEE, *Chairman, JLT Coordinating and Steering Committees*

ALAN E. WILLNER, *JLT Editor-in-Chief (2001-2006), IEEE LEOS President (2006-2007)*
Dept. of Electrical Engineering
Viterbi School of Engineering
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA 90089-2565

DOUG HARGIS, *JLT Editorial and Production Staff*

GABRIELLA BOSCO, *Editor-in-Chief*
Politecnico di Torino
Department of Electronics and Telecommunications
Torino, Italy