

Harris and McSkimin receive Acoustical Society medals

On 28 November, the Acoustical Society of America is to award the Wallace Clement Sabine Medal for architectural acoustics to Cyril M. Harris and a Silver Medal for physical acoustics to Herbert J. McSkimin. The presentation ceremonies are scheduled to take place at the ASA Fall Meeting in Salt Lake City.

Harris is well known for his consulting work on concert halls, particularly the renovations to Avery Fisher Hall in New York City, as well as his activities in noise control. His longstanding interest in sound began with visits to Warner Brothers film studios in Hollywood around the time talking pictures were being first produced. Harris later studied acoustics at the University of California, Los Angeles where he obtained a bachelor's degree (1938) and master's degree (1940). His MIT doctoral thesis (1945) related the measurement of acoustic impedance to the wave theory of room acoustics.

In 1945, Harris joined the technical staff of Bell Laboratories where he worked with J. C. Steinberg and W. A. Munson. After working at the London Branch of the Office of Naval Research (1951) and lecturing at the Technical University of Delft, The Netherlands (1951-52), he became a member of the faculty of Columbia University. Harris is now Charles Batchelor Professor of Electrical Engineering and a professor of architecture at Columbia.

McSkimin's reputation rests on his contributions to the understanding of the behavior and structure of metals. His colleagues describe him as "a highly inventive experimentalist whose ingenious measurement methods and instrumentation made possible improved accuracy and measurement of properties that could not previously be determined." McSkimin graduated from the University of Illinois with a BSEE in 1937. That same year he began work with Bell Laboratories where a long-term and highly productive association with Warren P. Mason formed. His earliest efforts were directed towards the development of quartz-crystal wave filters for carrier telephony.

During the Second World War McSkimin worked on underwater microphones and transducers and then turned



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his attention to ultrasonic delay lines in the late 1940's. As a supervisor of the Applied Physics and Exploratory Systems Department, he developed many techniques for using ultrasonics to measure the elastic properties of materials including single crystals, plastics and liquids at various temperatures and pressures. In 1973 McSkimin retired after 37 years with Bell Laboratories.



MCSKIMIN

The William Clement Sabine Medal is presented at one to three year intervals to an individual "who has furthered the knowledge of architectural acoustics . . ." The Silver Medal is awarded not more than three times each year and recognizes "significant achievements in science, engineering or human welfare through the application of acoustical principles . . ."

Fierz wins Max-Planck Medal

The German Physical Society has awarded this year's Max-Planck Medal to the Swiss theoretical physicist Markus Fierz, emeritus professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule: ETH) in Zurich. The society is honoring the entire career of a researcher who has made important contributions to quantum theory. Through his "relativistic field equations for arbitrary spin," Fierz laid the groundwork for the elucidation of a quite general law of nature, according to which statistical behavior of a particle is determined by its internal spin (the "spin and statistics theory").

Fierz had the good fortune to begin his scientific career in Zurich just as the first phase of the new attempts to understand

atomic structure were coming to an end (1936). He studied at ETH under two outstanding teachers, Gregor Wentzel and Wolfgang Pauli. Fierz received his doctorate in physics in 1936 and was a full professor by 1940. During World War II, Fierz moved to the University of Basel where he published his contributions to the theory of the behavior of mesons, which had just been discovered. He then devoted himself to a number of problems in nuclear physics, quantum field theory and general relativity. To those endeavors he added a keen interest in the historical development of physics, in particular, that of mechanics. In 1959, Fierz went to Geneva where he directed the theoretical group at CERN for a short time. The following year he returned to