

Remembering Gerald 'Jerry' Williams (1927 – 2023) – Assistive Listening Technology Pioneer and Founder of Williams Sound

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Gerald Ivar 'Jerry' Williams, a true visionary and pioneer in the field of assistive listening technology passed away on November 30, 2023, at the age of 96. A native Minnesotan, Jerry's journey into the world of electronics began during World War II when he enlisted in the Navy and served as an Electronic Technician's Mate aboard the USS Artemis. The rapid technological advancements in electronics during the war ignited Jerry's passion for the field, setting the stage for a remarkable career marked by innovation.

After graduating with an Electrical Engineering degree from the University of Minnesota, Jerry made significant contributions to the rapidly developing electronics industry. He played a

pivotal role in developing color TV receivers for Zenith and was part of the team that developed the UNIVAC File Computer at Engineering Research Associates. In 1958, Jerry co-founded Transistor Electronics Corp, where he designed and manufactured computer displays. His journey continued at Control Data, where he served on the technical management staff until 1979. By the time he left Control Data, Jerry held seven patents covering a variety of digital data displays, electrical circuit switching, and signal controls.

However, Jerry's enduring legacy lies in the company that bears his name and the products he created. In the mid-1970s, prompted by a request from his pastor to help those with hearing loss in the congregation, Jerry conceived a revolutionary wireless listening system – The Personal PA™ Broadcasting System. By broadcasting the service from an AM radio transmitter, listeners with a



Gerald 'Jerry' Williams - Founder of Williams Sound, now Williams AV

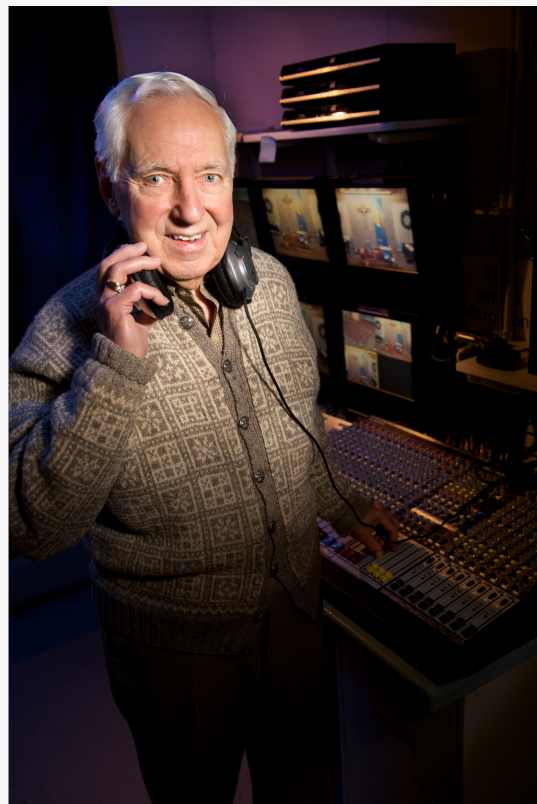
pocket radio receiver and earphones could sit anywhere they chose, control their own volume, and hear the service directly without bothersome background noise. However, the FCC issued revisions in 1975 that limited the power of unlicensed low-frequency transmitters. With two trips to the FCC, Jerry negotiated a nationwide frequency for hearing assistance transmitters to operate with increased power.

Jerry and his wife, Lorraine, established Williams Sound Corp. in 1976, which is dedicated to providing solutions for people with hearing loss. Following the Personal PA, Jerry's next innovation was a personal amplifier called the [Pocketalker®](#), which established the Assistive Listening Device, or ALD market. Since 1982, the Pocketalker remains the leading product in the ALD marketplace and has helped millions of hard-of-hearing people worldwide, including veterans who suffered hearing loss. Throughout the years, Jerry's commitment to aiding those with hearing loss led Williams Sound to continue to trailblaze the AV industry's assistive listening space. He introduced groundbreaking FM radio and Infrared assistive listening products with innovative features such as multi-channel operation and frequency agility.

Apart from technical innovations, Jerry also established a unique culture that lives on at [Williams AV](#). His deep faith guided him to create a work environment that was family-oriented, professional, and respectful, with a



Gerald 'Jerry' Williams - Williams Sound Founder in 1976



Gerald 'Jerry' Williams - innovator and pioneer of assistive listening technology

strong service orientation. A true servant leader, Jerry fostered a “Golden Rule” approach within the company and especially with customers that lives on today.

Jerry retired from Williams Sound in 1987, but his passion for helping others persisted. Even in retirement, he generously volunteered his expertise to enhance the sound systems of local churches and mentored aspiring audio-visual and recording professionals.

Nearly 50 years since its inception, Williams Sound, now Williams AV, remains dedicated to ensuring public spaces are accessible, with assistive listening products at the core of its business. Moreover, the company has broadened Jerry’s goal of enhancing communication through assistive devices for language interpretation, wireless intercom, guided tours, and entertainment. Today, the company’s products are available in more than 60 countries, expanding Jerry’s vision to connect people through improved communication.

The name Williams has become synonymous with innovation, quality, and customer service, a testament to the strong foundation Jerry built. His legacy lives on in the millions of lives touched by Williams Sound products and his ongoing pursuit of excellence, which the company continues today. Jerry Williams will be remembered as a visionary founder, technical pioneer, and compassionate leader whose impact will continue to reverberate through the decades.

About Williams AV

Headquartered in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, Williams AV leads the way in innovative design and manufacturing in professional and consumer assistive communication technology.

Established in 1976, the company pioneered the first assistive listening system, recognizing that true understanding goes beyond merely hearing words. Williams AV’s technology breaks down communication barriers, enhancing intelligibility and fostering meaningful connections. The comprehensive product portfolio includes assistive listening, interpretation, intercom, guided tours, and entertainment offerings, reflecting the company’s commitment to creating seamless and inclusive communication experiences.

Williams AV, whose name is synonymous with innovation, quality, and service, has a global network of distributors and integrators spanning over 60 countries. This network designs and installs the products in venues ranging from classrooms and courtrooms to houses of worship and stadiums, while consumer products are used daily in homes worldwide.

Williams AV – Empowering Connections Through Assistive Communication.

Learn more at www.WilliamsAV.com

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