



George Eisler Obituary

Recently we lost another friend in our work, one who seemed to know how to find consensus and compromise with a light touch and good humor. George Eisler passed away May 25, 2017. He was 89. His family held a gathering in Pasadena to celebrate his life on August 12.

Born in Budapest, Hungary, he immigrated to the US as a young boy. An accomplished and successful engineer, entrepreneur and businessman, he lived life to the fullest, always with humor, integrity and generosity.

While I was Dot3 Chair, George was a key technical contributor to the 1000BASE-T project (Gigbit Ethernet = George Eisler is too big a "coincidence" to ignore).

George brought a wonderful mix of experience, expertise, gentleness, humor and decency to the work in which he participated in 802.3 during a time when others were making decisions on a less technical basis. George's ability to stay away from that fray and still always be the delightful lighthearted guy he was is a memory that I will always treasure

Normally I would have asked George Zimmerman to do this presentation. He was much closer to George Eisler than I was. He has provided some additional details on the life of George Eisler for me to use.

Before there was IEEE 802.3, George Eisler was an early computer pioneer. He worked to build a computer at the Weizmann Institute in Israel. This was back when the general thinking was that the world would need only 5 such computers. He realized the importance of computing to industrial applications and automotive applications, well before there were personal computers. He became an advocate and practitioner of communications technology building voiceband modems for Commodore computers in the 1970s. When the Georges met in 1996 Eichler was already a standards professional. He understood, and taught Zimmerman much of what underlies the standards process which still guides him today. "Consensus comes from getting people to agree with you, he would say. Find out what they really want." Eichler was a master of that principle, and there is no smaller testament to him than 1000BASE-T, the most successful Ethernet to date, where he chaired the Task Force. George wasn't the leading technologist, but for those who remember the discussions in the Task Force, it was a very contentious standard with two good technical proposals, of which there could only be one chosen. Ultimately, with much cajoling, the two proponents got together in a bar in Hawaii and worked out the differences. When a prominent CTO in our industry reportedly complained "How come I always have to lose", George smiled, and replied, "don't worry - you can go win in the marketplace", knowing that was where it would matter to then young company, Broadcom.

There was a lot to learn from George - among the lessons were - not to take our struggles here too personally, to remember that everyone's business interests and technical interests are intertwined, to make sure to find humor and levity where we can, and to look for a potential win even (and especially) for those on the other side. So, help to remember him, and his legacy, leaving your most heated arguments with a little smile, understanding, and a kind word to your colleagues.