

The Don Hilliard Technical Achievement Award

Don Hilliard, WØPW, (exWØEYE) an early VHF pioneer was involved with the formation of the Central States VHF Society back in 1967. The Central States VHF Society was and still is very instrumental in promoting VHF and above activity. Back in 1985, Don realized that there was a considerable thrust in new microwave technology above 902 MHz. As a result, Don felt the need to have a conference devoted to the higher frequencies. The conference would be devoted to microwave equipment design, construction, and operation. At the time of its conception, many microwave terrestrial and EME firsts were occurring on the microwave bands and it truly appeared that microwave needed a dedicated conference. Don organized the first conference which he named "The 1296 and 2304 MHz Conference". It was held at the Holiday Inn in Estes Park, Colorado. 66 people were in attendance. It sure seemed like Don was on the right track with his idea and he was right. In 1986, Don held the second conference which he rightfully named "Microwave Update 86". 64 people were in attendance. The 1987 and 1988 "Microwave Update" conferences were again held in Estes Park, Co. and chaired by Don Hilliard.

After putting on 4 fine conferences in Colorado, Don decided to take a break from all of the work. Don turned over the responsibility of coordinating the event to the North Texas Microwave Society (NTMS). The rest is history. With the exception of one year where one of the organizers, Don Lund passed away, Microwave Update has been held every year. To this date including the 2011 conference being held in Enfield, CT, Microwave Update has been hosted 26 times. The conference has been successfully organized and run by various local VHF and microwave clubs and groups around the US.

In tribute to Don Hilliard and his tremendous contributions to VHF and microwave technology and for appreciation of his forward looking into the fascinating world of "microwaves", the North Texas Microwave Society on behalf of Microwave Update would like to create "The Don Hilliard Technical Achievement Award" presented each year to an amateur radio operator who has made significant contributions to amateur microwave operation and technology. The NTMS proposes that this award be presented to a deserving amateur each year by each sponsoring organization.

In recognition of Don's work, in 2009 the first Don Hilliard Award for Technical Contributions to the Microwave Community was awarded to Paul Wade, W1GHZ. The second year the Don Hilliard Award was presented to Will Jensby, WØEOM for his pioneering Microwave and SHF work.

The award is normally presented at the Saturday Banquet.

The award committee is organized much like an award for a PhD. The committee is chaired by WA5VJB and those who receive the Don Hilliard Award automatically become members of next year's committee. Thus, the current Awards Committee is WA5VJB, W1GHZ, and WØEOM.