

Arthur Kohlenberg

1924–1970



Arthur Kohlenberg, one of the best-known members of the Information Theory Group, died on July 19, 1970 from Hodgkins' disease.

His career spanned a number of disciplines. He received his B.A. in physics from Columbia at the age of 19. After three years as an army officer, he continued in physics at Harvard, where he received his Ph.D. in 1950. Subsequently, after two years of teaching quantum mechanics and doing research on optical signal processing at Boston University, he joined the M.I.T. Lincoln Laboratory. His early contributions there on the sampling theorem for bandpass signals and on the zero-crossing problem are still cited frequently in the literature. He then served nine years with Melpar, Inc., first as Consultant to the President and then as Technical Director of the Applied Science Division. In 1962 he was one of the founders of Codex Corporation, the first organization dedicated solely to the practical application of

information-theoretic research. He invented the diffuse form of threshold decoding, which made possible the widespread use of forward-error-correction on operational channels. At his death, he was Senior Vice-President of Codex.

Arthur will be long remembered in the Group for his quick wit and generous humanity, both of which he drew on in abundance as Editor of the *Transactions on Information Theory* from September 1960 through April 1964. The breadth of his interests and concern was remarkable. Warmly appreciative of good work by others, he was often sought as a sounding board for new ideas and was a catalyst to their growth. "One of the earliest and most respected workers in our field, he was above all an inspiring and treasured friend to the many whose lives he touched." (From an Administrative Committee resolution, August 25, 1970.)