

Audio Industry Icon Bob Heil Dies, Leaves World Mark On Live Sound

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BELLEVILLE - A man who left a lasting impact regarding sound and professional microphones and related accessories - Bob Heil - died at age 83 on Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024, after a long bout with cancer.



Heil mics are highly regarded around the world by Grammy-winning artists, professional podcasters, live sound and studio engineers, and satellite broadcast stations to reliably deliver natural, articulate, clear sound, and excellent rear noise rejection.

Heil Sound also has been able to understand and meet the needs of these various areas because it is comprised of people who have experience as musicians, podcasters, sound engineers, and broadcasters themselves.

Bob Heil's ingrained philosophy was always about providing the best and most reliable sound possible. He left that legacy with all his associates in his company and musicians and sound personnel throughout the world.

Famed musicians from Jerry Garcia, Joe Walsh, Slash, Peter Frampton, Richie Sambora and many others have always provided words of praise for this sound innovator.

The National Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio, has the Heil Sound technology display. Proceeds of the commemorative classic are being returned to the museum as support for the preservation of historic musical items. Anyone visiting the National Rock and Roll Hall of Fame should visit the Heil area to see the importance and lasting contributions of this innovative, yet humble man.

As with many business success stories, Heil Sound began with Bob Heil himself, who had a vision and an unrelenting drive to innovate and contribute to the concert sound world. Bob's impressive sound career began early on and by 15, he was performing concerts as the house player on the Wurlitzer theater organ at the Fox Theater in St. Louis.

Bob always loved to tinker and he was also deeply involved in ham radio and working with electronics and electronic design.

Bob opened his first business "Ye Olde Music Shoppe" in Marissa, IL., in the 1960s. He catered to professional touring bands. Heil Sound was founded in 1966 with a mission to provide touring gear and systems, system design and equipment for festivals.

At one point, Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead Band asked Heil, his crew and his sound system to be with them on the road. His setup later became a template for the modern concert touring sound system.

Heil Sound had this statement about the loss of their beloved founder.

"Bob fought a valiant, year-long battle with cancer, and passed peacefully surrounded by his family. Bob's impact on professional and live sound cannot be overstated. Driven by a lifelong passion for sound, Bob's pioneering work revolutionized how concertgoers experienced live sound. Bob created and developed numerous pro-sound innovations and products over the years, some of which are preserved in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum.

"In 2007, Bob was the recipient of the Audio Innovator Parnelli Award, recognizing his outstanding influence on the live sound industry. Countless artists, creators, broadcasters, podcasters, sound engineers, and sound professionals worldwide continue to be impacted by Bob's work. While Bob's presence will dearly be missed, we are immensely proud and happy to honor and carry on his legacy."

Heil had a wonderful quote in 2022: "My life has been about achieving great sound, whether on the concert stage or in the amateur radio world."

