



The

# **Broadcasters' Desktop Resource**

[www.theBDR.net](http://www.theBDR.net)

... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

## **Jim Somich**

**1941 - 2007**

**By Frank Foti**

[February 2007]

Jim Somich wrote:

*"I think back to the 1980's and a young engineer I hired who had a certain gleam in his eye. He did not have much experience but his enthusiasm was almost boundless. Little did I know that he would go on to become a true rock star in the processing world. This article is for you, Frank."*

Well, this one is for you Jim, as you are still bigger than a rock star in my life. With a very heavy heart I must share the news that Jim has passed on to the big audio processor factory in the sky, at the young age of 65.



**Jim Somich  
(1941-2007)**

### **A TALENTED ENGINEER**

Jim was a very successful broadcast engineer, as well as product developer. His career spanned radio, television, photography, movies, and just about any form of media imaginable.

Just to list a few stations – and brand names – where Jim worked tells a lot about the man: KFI, KMET, KIQQ, WMMS, WGAR, WHK, WHTZ, and WJW. He also built quite a number of UHF TV stations for Malrite Communications, where, at one time, he was Director of Radio Engineering.

Somich was also involved in a host of ventures, including Somich Engineering and MicroCon Systems. His curious mind ventured into some interesting and alternative areas, both inside and outside of broadcasting.

## **A MENTOR**

And yes, he was also the person who took a chance on a goofy, long-haired, 22-year-old kid. Stuck him under his wing and taught him the ropes of radio engineering. If not for Jim sticking his neck out for this passionate over-achiever, then Frank Foti would never have seized the opportunity to follow an exciting path in this industry.

They say that turn-about is fair play, and in 1987 I was able to return the favor. Malrite had promoted me to become the Director of Radio Engineering. The first assignment was to find my replacement for the Chief Engineer position at WHTZ-FM (Z-100) in NYC, at the time probably one of the top five radio engineering jobs in the country.

Jim was out in Los Angeles, working at an Hispanic UHF TV station, but was bored to tears. One evening, while out in LA, we hooked up for dinner. He told me he was considering getting back into radio. I asked him if this was an idle thought or for real. Upon realizing that he did want back into radio engineering, I said "Have I got the offer for you!" My first hire in the new position was my friend and mentor, Jim Somich.

## **A FRIEND**

Jim was never at a loss for ideas about gadgets for the world. Whenever we got together, he would spout off at least half-a-dozen ideas; I only wish we could have made them together.

During the development of Omnia.fm, Jim would pop down to our office at least once a week to have lunch. He was an early supporter of the effort and an excellent advisor on the project, offering honest feedback that helped me tune the beast. He would bring in a bevy of CDs to see if he could break it and, when he could not, his enthusiasm overflowed!

He was truly an inspirational person, and one who never offered a cross thought, or negative belief. I have him to thank for the 100% optimistic outlook on life. He was never one to give in, no matter what the odds. Together, he and I overcame some crazy situations in broadcasting, and always on top. Suffice it to say, that there is a piece of Jim Somich in every Omnia, if by way of his inspiration alone!

But most importantly Jim was - and will always remain - my friend. While there are many wonderful memories of him, sadly, we will not be able to create new ones.

Be at peace, Jim. Life and our industry have lost a great friend.

*Private services were held. The family would appreciate any memorials be sent, in his name, to the Northeast Ohio SPCA (pet rescue), 9555 Brookpark Rd., Parma, OH 44130.*

***Return to The BDR Menu***