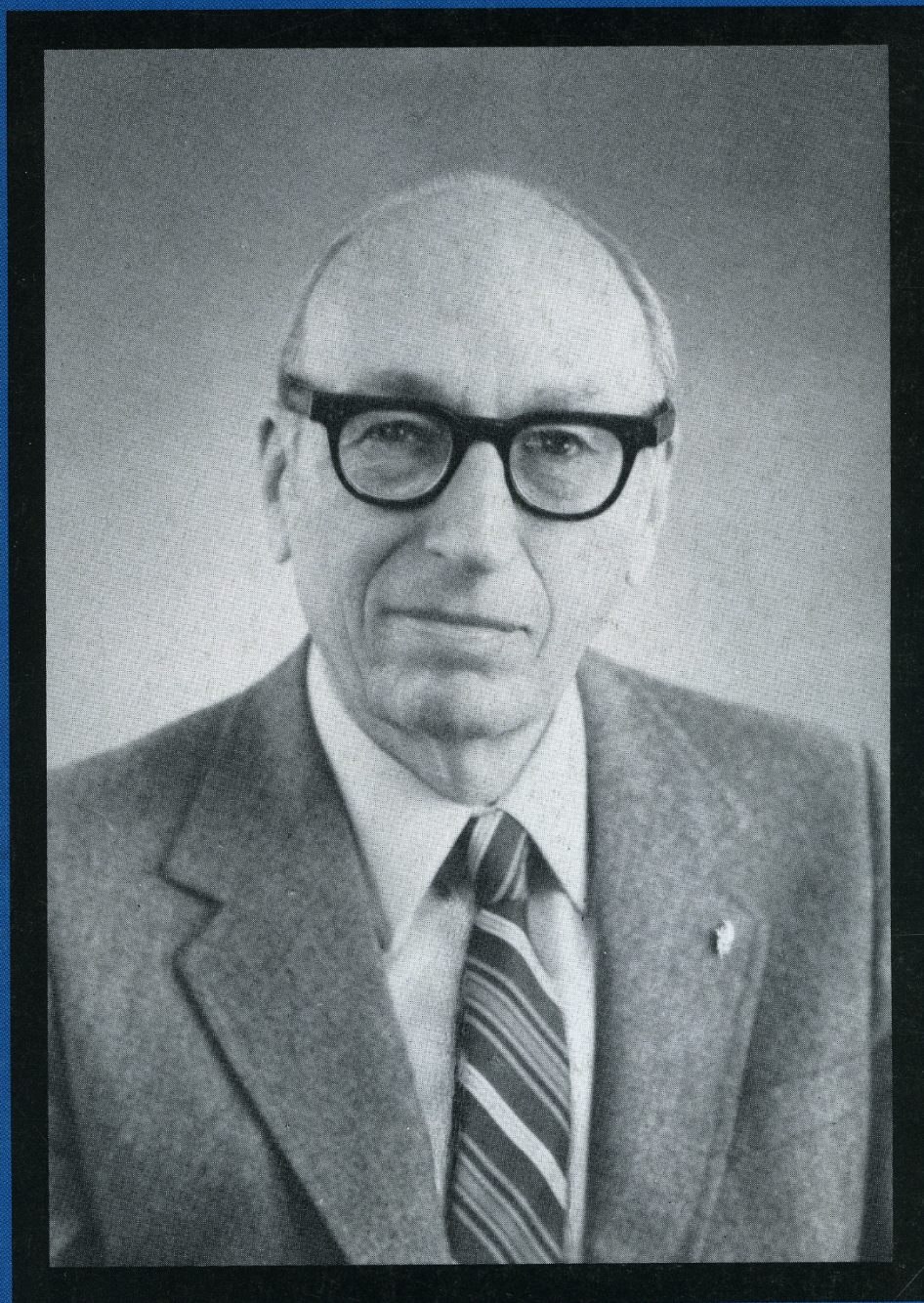


QST

January 1984 \$2.75

devoted entirely to Amateur Radio



Victor C. Clark, W4KFC
1917-1983





The American Radio Relay League, Inc., is a noncommercial association of radio amateurs, organized for the promotion of interest in Amateur Radio communication and experimentation, for the establishment of networks to provide communications in the event of disasters or other emergencies, for the advancement of the radio art and of the public welfare, for the representation of the radio amateur in legislative matters, and for the maintenance of fraternalism and a high standard of conduct.

ARRL is an incorporated association without capital stock chartered under the laws of the State of Connecticut, and is an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Its affairs are governed by a Board of Directors, whose voting members are elected every two years by the general membership. The officers are elected or appointed by the Directors. The League is noncommercial, and no one who could gain financially from the shaping of its affairs is eligible for membership on its Board.

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A bona fide interest in Amateur Radio is the only essential qualification of membership; an Amateur Radio license is not a prerequisite, although full voting membership is granted only to licensed amateurs in the U.S. and Canada.

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Victor C. Clark, W4KFC — 1917-1983

Vic Clark is dead. The key of W4KFC is silent; the friendly voice and clear, distinctive fist of its operator will not again be heard on the airwaves in this world. The American Radio Relay League has lost a President, the Amateur Radio community has lost a leader of rare stature, and hundreds — if not thousands — of us have lost a dear friend.

Vic's final week on this earth was characteristically busy as he pursued his responsibilities as League President — a voluntary position for which he received no compensation. On Friday, November 18, he journeyed to New York from his home in Clifton, Virginia, for the 75th anniversary banquet of the Radio Club of America. His report of the event read, "Feature attraction was appearance of KA2ORK and N2DRA of Grenada fame. They made an excellent and well-received presentation to the group. I was honored to be able to present them with Special Citations from the RCA." In typical fashion, Vic downplayed the honor bestowed upon him: he was made a "Fellow" of the RCA, joining a distinguished list of radio pioneers.

Sunday, November 20, found him participating as an observer in a telephone conference call meeting of the Canadian Radio Relay League Board of Directors, followed by a flight to Hartford for the following day's counting of ballots in the Director and Vice Director elections. Developments in the Volunteer Examination Program, in which Vic had a keen interest, occupied much of his attention that evening and Monday. He was thrilled with the news that Congress had enacted Senator Goldwater's legislation to permit the recoupment of expenses by Volunteer Examiner Coordinators, for it cleared the way for ARRL participation as a VEC — something which Vic believed was essential to the future of the Amateur Radio Service.

Following the ballot-counting on Monday and his telephoned congratulations to the winners, Vic headed home. To us, he looked as healthy as we could remember seeing him since a May 1979 heart attack had forced him to reduce his schedule and to limit his in-person participation at the 1979 World Administrative Radio Conference in Geneva — a disappointment to Vic, who had devoted much time during the previous several years to WARC-79 preparations. He left ARRL Headquarters for the last time in high spirits, convinced that the potholes were behind us and the road ahead was smooth. We spoke by

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

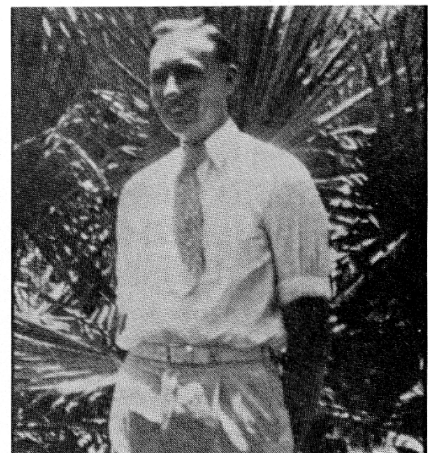
The family of Victor C. Clark, W4KFC, has requested that memorial contributions be made to the ARRL Foundation, 225 Main Street, Newington, CT 06111. The purpose of the memorial fund will be designated later, in accordance with the wishes of the family.

telephone several times on the following two days; again, he struck an optimistic chord.

The morning after Thanksgiving, on November 25, Vic complained to his wife Hester, WA4PAE, of chest pains. Because of his medical history, he was taken to the Commonwealth Doctors Hospital for observation. Even as the paramedics were readying him for the trip to the hospital in nearby Fairfax, his main concern was for others: he had been scheduled to attend the ARRL Florida State Convention in Clearwater that weekend, and wanted to be sure that a film he had planned to take down arrived on time and was sent on to its next destination.

That night, at 10:30 P.M., Vic Clark was stricken with a massive heart attack while under observation in the cardiac intensive care unit. One minute he was joking with the doctors; the next, he was gone.

The tragic news spread quickly through the worldwide Amateur Radio community. By noon Monday, ARRL Headquarters had received telegrams of condolence from



At age 19, Vic Clark was already a renowned radio amateur as W6KFC in Phoenix. He won the Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Award for 1936, the first year it was issued.

"You Never Forgot Anyone . . ."

30 November, 1983

Dear Vic,

In 1958 you had already been licensed for 26 years when at 12 years of age I discovered radio. It wasn't long before out of the 150,000 American hams, I knew who you were . . . You were the BEST. You were that melodious bug fist, W4KFC, your contest technique a generation ahead of anyone else.

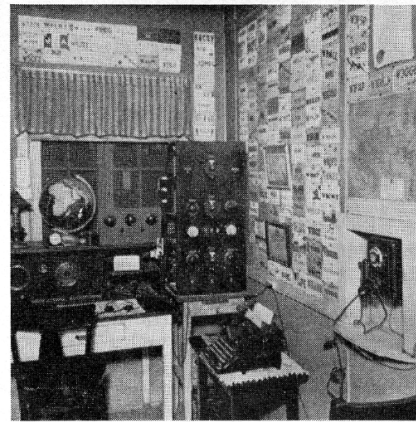
When I was 17, life brought me to a Potomac Valley Radio Club meeting. Standing head and shoulders above (6'4") all, there you were. When you spotted me, you hurried over to introduce yourself and welcome a visitor. When I told you my call, you asserted that you had heard of me even though I didn't see how you could have. A year later I asked you to visit our teenage Field Day set up. You not only did, you let us use your call, W4KFC/4. I still have the photo of me with a sign showing that call.

So maybe three times we met, before I moved to New Mexico to become WA5YTX, and then KT5X. Once every few years we would encounter each other on the air, and you always remembered me. Once while on vacation in Wyoming, both of us QRP, we QSO'ed. You asked me to look up an old friend of yours in Laramie. This man's wife was dying of cancer and he needed a friend. It turned out that you hadn't seen this gentleman since 1942! You never forgot anyone, and had only kind words for everyone.

Last summer the phone rang, and Bill, K5MAT told me that a friend of mine was looking for me on two meters, would I like to know who it was? I said, "sure!" "It's the President of the ARRL!" Yes, you had finally been given the responsibility you most of all deserved. And taking time out from your vacation to visit someone you hardly knew was absolutely typical. You gave me a Canadian Penny, the only coin ever minted with Morse code on it. I just wonder how many folks realize that we have the frequencies that we do largely thanks to your world-wide WARC preparations.

When I was 12 I made a boyhood idol out of a fist and a call. At 38 I just want to say, "Vic, when I grow up, I want to be just like you!"

73, OT es 88
Fred "FD" Maas
KT5X



Here is the layout at W6KFC as it appeared in 1937. For the modern version of W4KFC, see May 1983 QST, p. 44.

all six continents. A memorial service in Washington on Wednesday, November 30, drew more than 400 mourners, the vast majority of them radio amateurs and government officials. The Rev. David Reeder, WA0URJ, officiated. Six amateurs were honored by being asked to deliver brief eulogies: W0BWJ, W4NH, W2GHK, HK3DEU, W4YE and myself. Before the service, the six of us compared notes and found that we had treated six different facets of the man, with essentially no overlap. Vic was that big.

The saga of Victor C. Clark, W4KFC, begins on August 23, 1917, in Falmouth, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod. Vic believed that he was the last surviving member of his generation off the *Mayflower* — a claim that was put forward more out of curiosity than pride. His family moved to Phoenix in the early 1920s, and it was here that Vic grew up and became interested in radio.

First licensed in September 1933, his first appearance on the air was as W6KFC (Arizona was part of the sixth call area in those days) in January 1934. Those early years were not easy ones — Vic's father died when he was nine years old, and his school years were marked by lengthy illnesses — but they taught him how to overcome adversity by hard work and good humor.

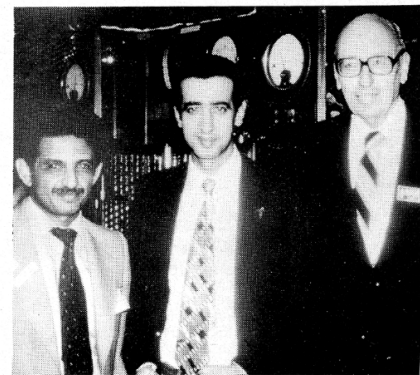
By 1936, W6KFC had become a familiar call sign in traffic handling, contest and DX circles. That year, the founding President of the ARRL, Hiram Percy Maxim, passed away, and his children decided to offer a memorial award to the League member under the age of 21 who made the greatest contribution to Amateur Radio, or had the best all-around record, in a given year. Nineteen-year-old Vic Clark was chosen as the first recipient. Writing in August 1937 QST, Clinton B. DeSoto, W1CDB, said

The American Radio Relay League with its members have suddenly found themselves without the leadership, advice and wise counsel of Victor Clark. As a former Director and more recently its president, he gave to the League the same sensitive and dynamic leadership that he had applied throughout his lifetime — be it his family, his job or the countless other areas of involvement. When the world-wide Amateur Radio community heard the sad news, the common reaction was that a great service had lost a true friend who was in every way a real gentleman.

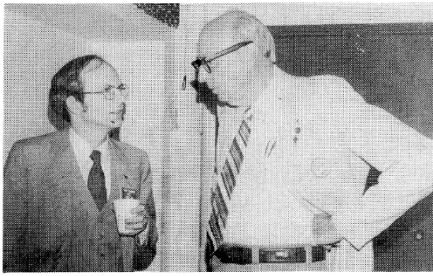
He was the author of the lead editorial entitled "Team Spirit" in the current issue of QST. He believed that Team Spirit was the powerful force that would enable the participating radio amateurs to cope with the challenges of the future. Vic was a Team Player who looked to the future; in the same issue is his picture with Astronaut Owen Garriott planning for the first Amateur Radio operation from space.

ARRL presidents who preceded Vic knew he was no fair-weather supporter: he was at his best when the going was rough. Vic had the unique ability to guide any meeting through the pitfalls of disagreement and dissension by wise counsel, consideration of differing opinion and the use of his special type of wit and humor. The growth and progress of the League are among his most successful accomplishments.

Above all he was one of the friendliest and most approachable of men. He knew no classes, he recognized no distinctions. He walked humbly with his friends, his co-workers and fellow men. Perhaps this is the greatest of all the legacies he gave to those who knew him. — *Eulogy delivered by Carl Smith, W0BWJ, November 30, 1983*



Vic devoted considerable energy and talent to WARC-79 preparations, but could not attend full time because of earlier heart trouble. He made the most of his time in Geneva, though, renewing old acquaintances and making new ones among the delegates. In this 1979 photo, Vic is shown with Hassan, J28AA (Djibouti), and Amour, 7X2AJ (Algeria). Vic was especially interested in telephilately — postage stamps with telecommunications themes, particularly Amateur Radio; his discussion with Hassan led to the issuance in 1981 of a postage stamp honoring the Club des Radio-Amateurs de Djibouti.



W4KFC's service to Amateur Radio included four years as President, and three years as Vice President, of IARU Region 2. He stepped aside at the Cali Conference in June 1983 to be able to devote more time to his ARRL duties. Here, he takes advantage of a quiet moment to compare notes with the Editor on how the Conference is progressing.

during the critical years before and during the 1979 World Administrative Radio Conference, and traveled to more than 40 countries to generate support for the IARU position. Through it all he remained active in his local Amateur Radio organizations, particularly the Potomac Valley Radio Club, and contributed articles to *QST* and *CQ*.

One of Vic's first encounters with the FCC in Washington came after World War II, when he intervened on behalf of the many amateurs who, like himself, had relocated during or after the war years and wished to have "counterpart" call signs — that is, call signs in their new call area with the same suffix they had had in the old. Through gentle persuasion, he was able to gain this privilege not only for himself but for countless others as well. Unfortunately, FCC was later to abandon the practice.

As active as he was organizationally, he is probably better known for his on-the-air



Just a week before his death, Vic presented a Special Citation to Mark Baretella, KA2ORK, on behalf of the Radio Club of America. (N2ATT photo)

operating. At the 1983 ARRL National Convention in Houston, Vic asked those attending the ARRL Forum how many of them had worked him. About three-fourths of the audience raised their hands! It was an impressive display, but not altogether surprising: For decades, if you hadn't worked W4KFC in the Sweepstakes, you hadn't been on. He was equally active and successful in DX contests, particularly after moving to his hilltop location in Clifton in the mid-50s. The Clifton site was such a

Dear Friends, it's good to see so many of you here today, to join in paying tribute to the man who most of us regard as the leading radio amateur of the postwar era. Vic Clark was a champion of Amateur Radio in both senses of the word: a world-class operator as well as one of its greatest protectors and supporters. At ARRL Headquarters the messages of condolence are pouring in — from all six continents and more than a dozen countries by yesterday afternoon. Thousands of radio amateurs feel that they have suffered a personal loss — for, as his many friends in Latin America would say, Vic Clark was *simpatico*.

Vic served his fellow radio amateurs, both present and future, in a variety of roles — from Section Communications Manager of the ARRL Arizona and Virginia Sections to ARRL President. He played a key role in our success at the 1979 World Administrative Radio Conference, although his earlier heart trouble forced him to limit his time in Geneva. As Chairman of the ARRL Long Range Planning Committee, Vic laid the groundwork for the League of the 1980's and beyond — a revitalized organization with greater opportunities for grassroots involvement which was just taking shape when he was taken from us. He felt that his winning of the 1936 Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Award had given him an important boost early in life, so as a personal project he set out to re-establish this prestigious award for a new generation of young radio amateurs. Several of you who are here today were key contributors to the endowment fund for the Maxim Award, and I know Vic was gratified that you shared his vision.

As great as the loss of Vic Clark is to our organization, it is eclipsed by the personal loss felt by those who were privileged to work with him. Vic was already famous when I first read about him as a 12-year-old, aspiring ham in 1962. I recall, as do many of you, the thrill of my first contact with W4KFC, 20 years ago this month, and the rush to send my QSL card so as to receive his in return — a request which he honored promptly, as he always did. The honor that I felt in taking office as General Manager at the same time Vic assumed the Presidency is difficult to express. He took great pleasure in introducing me as one who was young to be General Manager, but who was aging rapidly.

While his 20 months as ARRL President was much too short, his accomplishments have left an indelible impression on our organization. Vic was modest in triumph, and always anxious to shift the credit, but never the blame, to others. How aggrieved we are to have lost Vic Clark — and how fortunate we are to have known him! — *Eulogy delivered by David Sumner, K1ZZ, November 30, 1983*



W4KFC with Dr. Ernest Ambler, Director of the National Bureau of Standards, at the November 3, 1983, dedication of the Bureau Radio Amateur Signal Society (BRASS) club station.

classic example of a good radio location that it was featured in W3AFM's "Station Design for DX" *QST* series in 1966. But it was operating ability, and not location or antenna hardware, that was the key to Vic's success. In the three months just before he took office as ARRL President, Vic worked 111 countries with a 2-watt rig — just to see if he could do it. His operating energies were not devoted entirely to competitive activities. He remained active in traffic handling and became a regular participant in Straight Key Night and the Novice Roundup — the former because of the value he placed on frater-nalism, and the latter because he thought it important to give beginners a word of encouragement and a helping hand. In his last Novice Roundup, in 1983, he worked more than 200 stations and sent each a QSL card and a letter of welcome. The conscientious way he discharged his Presidential duties cut into his operating time, but he continued to meet schedules as frequently as possible with friends throughout the world.

Vic Clark was more than an exemplary radio amateur: he was also successful in his career, and was intensely devoted to his family. Vic served with the Federal Aviation Administration and its predecessor agencies from 1941 to 1962, directing the establishment of the instrument landing system (ILS) at airports throughout the U.S. and assisting with the implementation of the system in other countries. He then became director of the U.S. Coast Guard Electronics Engineering Laboratory in Alexandria, serving in that post until his retirement in 1973. Vic and Hester raised six children, including three hams: Andrew (WA4PRF, now living in Japan), Kenneth (K4OKZ), Roger, Jennifer, Beth (KA4YTN) and Miriam. He had seven grandchildren. As supportive as Hester was of Vic's activities, he was equally supportive of hers, particularly in the 4-H.

How do you sum up such a man in few words? Perhaps Hal Steinman, K1ET, has said it best: "Vic Clark was a big man who never made anyone else feel small." — *David Sumner, K1ZZ*