



# David Sarnoff Library

Princeton, New Jersey

*“David Sarnoff’s life has paralleled that of the communications industry . . . His prophetic visions of the enormous possibilities of wireless communications for commerce, public information, and entertainment, combined with his knowledge of the technical possibilities, have provided the objectives and challenges of a major segment of the wireless communications industry for more than half a century.”*

**JEROME B. WIESNER**

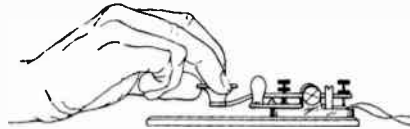


A view of the main room.

# David Sarnoff Library

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

A MEMORIAL TO DAVID SARNOFF 1891 — 1971



The books, documents, correspondence, instruments, and models available for study or on display at the David Sarnoff Library in Princeton, New Jersey, constitute a prime source for research on the communications era and the industrial pioneer who was in large measure responsible for its development. They comprise a unique and richly diversified collection of materials assembled by General Sarnoff in the course of more than six decades, spanning the period from wireless telegraphy through radio and television to computers and communications satellites.

Over 700 volumes cover the technical and commercial activities, letters, public statements, and speeches of General Sarnoff spanning his entire career. Other documents relate to his proposals for the use of wireless, including his famous memorandum on a "radio music box," his vision on the broad applications of technology and electronics, and the wide range of his public services and interests. Notable in the collection is his correspondence with five Presidents of the United States, from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Lyndon B. Johnson.

Ranged along the walls and in glass-enclosed cases, in addition to the books, are the memorabilia of a man who devoted a lifetime to communications and to making the products of the electronics laboratory available to the world. Among the devices on display is the famous telegraph key which the youthful Sarnoff used on the night of April 14, 1912, when he received the news of the *Titanic* sinking. Another is a key on which he tapped the letter "S" in Morse code by wireless around the world, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Guglielmo Marconi's historic transatlantic feat. One interesting item is a small "50-cent" hand-operated phonograph which he proposed be dropped behind the Iron and Bamboo curtains for propaganda purposes.

David Sarnoff never forgot his humble origins as an immigrant boy who came to the United States at the age of nine. Almost from the day he landed, he went to work to support his family. His formal education thus ended with public school. Among his most cherished possessions was an honorary diploma of graduation given him many years later by Stuyvesant High



David Sarnoff as a young wireless operator at Marconi Station, Siasconset, on Nantucket Island.

School in New York City. It is on display together with 26 honorary degrees awarded to him by some of the nation's most distinguished colleges and universities.

From the beginnings of his career as an office boy and wireless telegraph operator, David Sarnoff went on to become head of the world's foremost electronics company, the RCA Corporation, and the acknowledged spokesman for his industry. On display in several cases are the testimonials and citations from his colleagues and competitors in communications, broadcasting, and electronics, paying tribute to his leadership.

The nature of the communications and broadcasting media and General Sarnoff's contributions in these fields made him an eminent figure internationally as well as in the United States. A number of foreign

W.14	<b>WIRELESS</b>	April 16th, 1912.
<hr/>		
NO. _____	CK _____	Time Received _____
<b>TO</b>		
Captain Jordan. Wanamaker Store, New York.		
<p>The following is a copy of the message received at the Wanamaker Wireless Station, at 2.18 A.M. April the sixteenth, 1912. direct from the White Star Line S. S. Olympic, at sea. Distance 1350 miles.</p> <p>This was the first direct confirmation of the terrible Titanic disaster, the greatest ocean wreck in history.</p>		
<u>MESSAGE</u>		
" Carpathia returning to New York with women and children numbering 866 Grave fears entertained for safety of rest. "		
S. S. Olympic.		

Wireless operator David Sarnoff reports on the *Titanic* disaster.

governments, among them France, Italy, Israel, and Japan, presented him with high decorations which may be seen together with awards from his own country. A particularly interesting display from abroad consists of objets d'art, books, and other items acquired during his visit to Japan.

In his relationships with the greats of the world, including Sir Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, and Guglielmo Marconi, General Sarnoff was especially proud of his deep friendship with Arturo Toscanini whom he succeeded in getting to return to America to direct the NBC Symphony Orchestra, expressly created for the Italian conductor. Among the Toscanini mementos on display at the Library are exchanges of letters with General Sarnoff, a baton with which he conducted, and a passage from the "Requiem" by Giuseppe Verdi, with his handwritten notes.

Military and public service played a prominent part in General Sarnoff's career, and his military and civilian appointments, Presidential citations, and awards are on view in cases and on the walls. Among these are his appointment by President Roosevelt as one of the original members of the Fair Employment Practices Committee, his appointment by President Truman as chairman of the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Manpower Utilization in the Armed Services, his reappointment to this same post by President Eisenhower, his appointment by President Eisenhower to the Committee on Department of Defense Organization, his appointment by President Eisenhower as chairman of the National Security Training Commission, his appointment by President Kennedy to the Citizens' Committee for Foreign Aid, and his appointment by President Johnson to



Announcing the birth of television at the 1939 New York World's Fair.



Correspondence between David Sarnoff and Maestro Arturo Toscanini which led to the formation of the NBC Symphony Orchestra.

The main room of the Library, showing a display case with correspondence from Presidents and world leaders.



the Commission on Heart Disease, Cancer, and Stroke.

In 1961, more than 30 Senators paid tribute to General Sarnoff on the occasion of his 55th anniversary in communications, and the testimonial presented during this unique public homage to a private American is also on display.

The task of assembling this material in one central location was begun in 1964. On September 28, 1967, the David Sarnoff Library was officially dedicated. Situated on rolling grounds in a secluded spot, the two-story building includes a main library room, several smaller display rooms, and an office for General Sarnoff, where he met frequently with RCA scientists and officers of the company until shortly before his death. The Library is part of the David Sarnoff Research Center at Princeton, N.J.

Excellent working conditions are available for scholars wishing to review the books and papers of the Library. Five quiet study rooms are available, as are facilities

for reviewing taped and filmed material. There is parking space for 40 automobiles adjacent to the Library.

The David Sarnoff Library is open weekdays for research and tours, and for use of the staff, throughout the year, between 10:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. There are no fees to visit the Library or to use its facilities. However, students and scholars wishing to use the facilities, or groups wishing to tour the Library, are requested to write in advance to the David Sarnoff Library, CN 5300, Princeton, N.J. 08543-5300.

Receiving the Senate's testimonial in 1961.



# Guide to Exhibits and Materials on Display

## MAIN ROOM

### Foyer

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The foyer contains 13 signed portraits and photographs, among them Arturo Toscanini, Thomas A. Edison, Michael Pupin, Guglielmo Marconi, and Albert Einstein. At one side of the main entrance in the hall is a photographic reproduction of the bronze plaque which now hangs in the main reception room. It commemorates the renaming of the RCA Laboratories in Princeton as the David Sarnoff Research Center.

### West Wall

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The framed display on the West Wall above the cabinet is a representation of David Sarnoff's military career, starting with his appointment as Lieutenant Colonel in 1924. It includes his appointment as Brigadier General and ends with a plaque from the Air Force for his service on the Air Force Board of Visitors, 1960-1962. In addition to citations and commendations on his World War II service, there are also awards and citations from service organizations, such as the National Commander's Award of the American Legion and the Gold Citizenship Medal of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

### Case 1—Recent Awards

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In this case are some of the later awards which General Sarnoff received—the Modern Pioneer Award from the National Association of Manufacturers which he received in

July, 1967, in Frankfurt, Germany, and four medals from the National Shrines Advisory Board which were presented in June, 1967, in connection with the citation signed by New York Mayor John V. Lindsay. The Steuben bowl was presented by the Harvard Business School Club of New York in May, 1967. The other pieces in this case cover a broad range of his activities—military, civic, and business

### Case 2—Industrial and RCA

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This case contains a number of photographs showing General Sarnoff's early service as a wireless telegraph operator for the Marconi Company and his trip on the S.S. Beothic sealing expedition. In addition to the large lithograph of the Titanic, there is a telegraph key similar to the key he used at Wanamaker Station at the time of the ship's sinking. The original key is on loan to the Smithsonian Institution. A selection of photographs on the other side of the case depicts highlights of communications and television history in RCA. A 1921 inspection tour group is interesting in that it includes Einstein, Steinmetz, and Langmuir. A "50-cent" propaganda phonograph is also exhibited.

### Case 3—RCA and NBC

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Most of the material in this case is from either RCA or NBC. The large display that



includes the globe denotes the development of communications from the era of the telegraph key to the satellite, and commemorates General Sarnoff's 55th anniversary in communications. There is also a plaque containing the first true-profit dollar from RCA color television, a small silver plate from the 5,000,000th RCA television receiver, and a large silver bowl from the Institute of High-Fidelity Manufacturers.

#### Case 4—Civic and Professional

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This case contains a number of framed awards and citations from professional and civic organizations. Among them are the Grande Medaille of the Association des Ingenieurs-Docteurs de France, a tribute from Lee DeForest, a citation from the New York World's Fair Executive Committee, a citation from the Poor Richard Club, and a Silver Buffalo Award from the Boy Scouts. There are also numerous medals relating to these and other civic awards.

#### Case 5—Civic and Professional

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This case contains civic, professional, and industrial awards. There are silver trays from the Colonial Society of Pennsylvania and the New York Board of Trade, and a silver bowl from the Advertising Council, as well as the Trustees Award from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, and a silver wreath from the Screen Producers Guild.

#### Case 6—Presidential Commissions

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One side of this case contains several signed Presidential Commissions, naming General Sarnoff to the National Security Training

Commission and the Presidential Commission on Heart Disease, Cancer, and Stroke. There are also copies of bills signed by President Johnson, with accompanying souvenir pens. The other side contains autographed photos of Eisenhower, Truman, Roosevelt, Johnson, and Churchill, together with letters from them.

#### Case 7—Presentation Bowls

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This case contains three pieces of Steuben glass—the Sarnoff crystal from the J. Walter Thompson Co. advertising agency, and bowls from the Radio & Television News Directors Association on the 50th anniversary of the sinking of the *Titanic*, and from RCA on General Sarnoff's 50th anniversary in radio, television, and electronics. There is also a gold medal from the same occasion.

#### Case 8—International Gifts

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The items in this case are all from foreign countries. The silver galleon is from the British Cable & Wireless Ltd., the silver ewer from Montreux, the boomerang from the Institute of Radio Engineers (IRE) in Australia, and the key from the City of Tokyo.

#### Case 9—Civic, International

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This wall case contains medals and decorations from a number of foreign governments, as well as a citation from the United Nations and the document announcing General Sarnoff's appointment as a Commander of the Legion of Honor.

### Case 10—Military and Governmental

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The most significant document in this case is the U.S. Senate Testimonial to General Sarnoff presented in 1961. There are also the Legion of Merit and the Medal of Merit awards, and a number of U.S. medals, including two from the Freedom Foundation.

### Case 11—Professional and Industrial

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This case contains the 60th anniversary citation to General Sarnoff from three associations—the Electronic Industries Association (EIA), the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, (IEEE), and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). Other important pieces include the Institute of Radio Engineers Founders Award and the Sarnoff Medal of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers (AIEE).

### Case 12—Musical and Civic

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In this case there are three Toscanini letters, including a description of his formation of the NBC Symphony Orchestra and a listing of the instruments to be included. There is also a passage from Verdi's "Requiem" scored by Toscanini, and a "Happy Birthday" greeting. Other musical awards include a citation from the Metropolitan Opera Association.

### Case 13—Documents and Diplomas

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This case contains seven racks holding 26 honorary degrees and diplomas, followed by about 20 racks containing 145 documents that include awards, appointments, and citations.

### Case 14—Civic and Educational

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Among the pieces displayed in this case are a certificate and medal from the National Institute of Social Sciences, the Horatio Alger Award from the American Association of Colleges and Universities, a large medal and scroll from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, and a medal naming General Sarnoff a Yeshiva University Science Fellow.

### Additional Items

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The bust of General Sarnoff on display in the Library is a plaster copy of the original bronze, which was done by Jo Davidson. The large painting on the West Wall depicts the David Sarnoff Research Center, with the David Sarnoff Library wing in the foreground. It is by Clarence Carter, and was completed in June 1967.

## GALLERY ROOMS

### Room 1

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The material in this room is mainly from RCA and NBC, with some awards from civic and professional organizations. The wall case contains a collection of miniatures representing various RCA achievements. The citations on the wall are from RCA and NBC with a large photograph of the 60th-anniversary celebration. The portrait of General Sarnoff at the end of the room was presented by the Golden Slipper Square Club in 1954.

## Room 2

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Much of the material in this room deals with New York City and New York State. There is also an Indian scroll from the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce and a copy of the Science and Technology bill signed by President Johnson. The West Side Association medal displayed in the case is one of the awards presented to General Sarnoff in 1966.

## Room 3

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This room contains a large bronze bas relief of Marconi and several historical pieces, including a letter from Samuel F. B. Morse and a volume on Faraday from Thomas Carlyle's personal library. Displayed on the left wall are several awards, including one from the Deafness Research Foundation and a plaque received by General Sarnoff on his election to the Radio Hall of Fame. The

photograph was taken at Cooper Union with Frank Lloyd Wright.

## Room 4

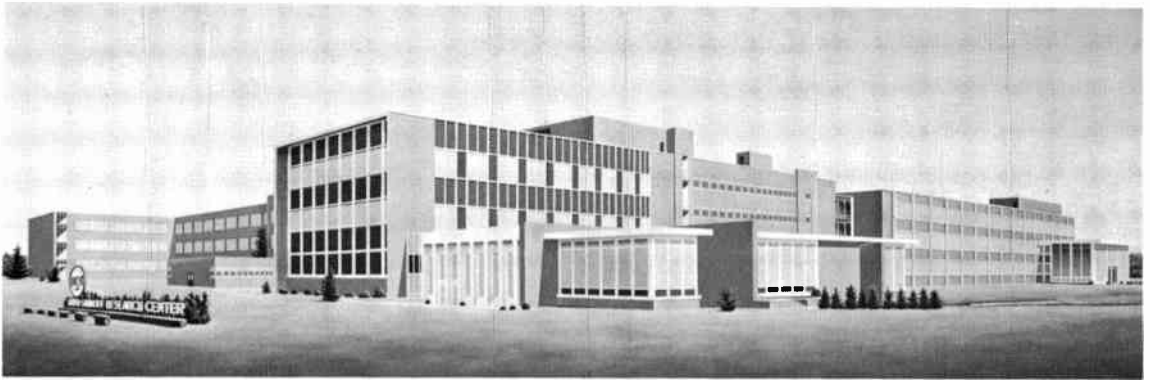
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The material in the case in this room is a collection of international mementos and memorabilia. There are pieces from Toledo, Spain, and from Greece and South America, as well as various foreign medals.

## Room 5

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This room contains three scrolls, two of them Japanese and one Chinese from Taiwan. There is a collection of books on Japan, some of them in Japanese. Among the books are a set of five in classical Japanese, a book on Zen Buddhism, and an inscribed copy of Admiral Nomura's history. There is also a Noh mask from the Japanese classical theater. The four cloisonne plates are part of a set of 12 presented to General Sarnoff.



**David Sarnoff Research Center**  
Princeton, New Jersey