

Pioneer



Connection

Issue 23-04

April 2023

SPECIAL EDITION

2023 ITPA Telephone Hall of Fame Inductees

The ITPA's Telephone Hall of Fame was founded in 1964 by ITPA Pioneers to recognize individuals in who contributed not only to their telephone company, but to the telephony industry at large.

The Hall of Fame provides a forum through which excellence is rewarded by colleagues, employers and the leaders in telecommunications.

The accomplishments of individuals who have been inducted into the Telephone Hall of Fame demonstrated insight into the into and were contributory to the development and growth of the telecommunications industry.

Hall of Fame nominees are individuals who have made positive and substantial contributions to the development, growth, and public perception of the telephone industry, on a national scale, over a period of many years.

To be eligible, an individual must have reached age 70, be retired from the industry for at least three years, or be deceased.

Arthur F. Adams was the inaugural Hall of Fame inductee in 1965. Read more about the contributions of Mr. Adams to the telecommunications industry on Page 5.

This year, two individuals will be inducted into the Telephone Hall of Fame, and they will be honored at a special Hall of Fame Luncheon during the ITPA's upcoming 31st annual spring assembly in Hinesville, Georgia.

Both inductees literally grew up in the telephone company; the switchboards for both companies was located in their parents' homes and as young children they began learning how they worked.

Janice Eloise O'Brien will be posthumously honored, having deceased in 2021. Under her leadership as CEO, the family-owned Glenwood Telephone Company made many technological advances to continually provide improved excellent telecommunications services to its customers.

Hannah Askins Lancaster worked in the telecommunications industry for 60 years. Her family owned and operated Chesnee Telephone , and she held several positions within the company before accepting the role of CEO. She retired in 2017 after having provided visionary leadership that allowed the company to continually improve and enhance services available to its faithful customers.

Read more about the long and illustrious careers of both deserving women and their meaningful contributions to the telecommunications industry.

2023 Telephone Hall of Fame Inductee Hannah Askins Lancaster



The ITPA will formally induct **Hannah Askins Lancaster** into the Telephone Hall of Fame at the 31st Annual National Assembly in Hinesville, GA.

Mrs. Lancaster was born into the telecommunications industry. Her parents, Harold and Pansy Askins, had purchased a small telephone company in Chesnee, SC in 1932, five years before her birth.

Little Hannah's parents ran the company from their home, and she grew up learning how to work the cords at the switchboard. Mrs. Lancaster recalls playing underneath the switchboard as a child and she remembers that the switchboard operator slept in their home. While not yet on the payroll, she recalls sitting on the operator's lap and connecting calls on the switchboard. Unofficially, she served as the "junior" operator.

Mrs. Lancaster graduated from Chesnee High School and attended both Lander College and Limestone College in the mid-1950s. In 1957, after marrying Curtis B. Lancaster, she began her long and illustrious career at Chesnee Telephone. Curt initially worked for the Kohler Company, but his father-in-law would at times call him to various telephone work sites to "show him something interesting." Neither Curt or Mrs. Lancaster realized at the time that her father was grooming Curt for a place in the telephone company.

In 1965, Mrs. Lancaster's father passed away and her mother became President. Her brother, Bud Askins, became vice president and she became the company's Secretary. After her mother's death in 1992, Mrs. Lancaster became President of Chesnee Telephone Co and under her leadership the company continued to thrive. The company's outside plant was improved and new technologies were implemented. Fiber optic lines and remote switches were installed in rural areas to protect Chesnee from isolation due to accidental cable cuts.

In the 1990s, additional services such as cable TV and wireless and internet services were added to the company's portfolio, along with more technology upgrades. During the decades that followed, many technology upgrades and new services were offered to a growing customer base under Mrs. Lancaster's leadership, and she remained vitally involved in the day-to-day activities of the company until her retirement.

Despite their hectic work schedules during that era, Mr. and Mrs. Lancaster attended many ITPA chapter meetings, state assemblies and national assemblies to support the work and mission of ITPA.

A member of the National ITPA since 1975, Mrs. Lancaster has served on numerous ITPA committees, and she also served as Vice-President, Regional Vice-President, and President of the ITPA. She is still an active Pioneer and has an affiliation with two state ITPA chapters – Comporium (SC) and Tar Heel (NC).

Mrs. Lancaster additional memberships have included the United States Telecom Association (USTA), the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 48 in Chesnee, SC and the South Carolina Telecommunications and Broadband Association (SCTBA). She was inducted into the SCTBA Hall of Fame in 2016.

Mrs. Lancaster has long been a dedicated community servant. She has served on a church committee to provide food and other necessities to those less fortunate. At a larger community level, she has provided company equipment and planned fundraisers to help with various community needs. The Lancaster family tried to ensure that people in their community who were not only their customers but also their friends and neighbors, were both served and cared for.

Mrs. Lancaster retired in 2017 with 60 years of dedicated service to the company and to her community. Mr. and Mrs. Lancaster were happily married for 65 years before his death in 2022. Their three children, along with their grandchildren, are among their greatest accomplishments.

2023 Telephone Hall of Fame Inductee Janice Eloise Adams O'Brien



The National Independent Telecommunications Pioneer Association (ITPA) headquartered in Hinesville, GA is pleased to announce that Janice Eloise Adams O'Brien will be posthumously inducted to the Telephone Hall of Fame on April 23, 2023 during the ITPA's 31st Annual National Assembly in Hinesville, GA.

A native of Dublin, GA, Janice Eloise Adams was born in 1945, and she literally grew up in the telephone company. Her parents, L.B. and Eloise, ran the switchboard for Glenwood Telephone Company from the front room of their home. As a young child, she was exposed daily to the workings of the plug board, the operator's role, maintenance, and what was happening in the local area. These experiences helped prepare her for the much larger roles she would later hold in the company, after she completed her education at the University of Georgia.

When her father passed away in 1982, her mother having earlier deceased, Mrs. O'Brien became the owner and CEO of Glenwood Telephone Company at the age of 37.

The company's office, having been previously relocated from the home, was moved back into the Adams home in 1989 under Mrs. O'Brien's leadership.

Also in 1989, the company added 13 miles of fiber optic cable to its facilities as part of capital improvement initiative. In 1990, the company's XY switch was replaced with a Siemens DCO to usher in the era of digital switching.

In 1994, Mrs. O'Brien accepted the role of President of the Georgia Telecommunications Association and she was instrumental in helping to author and pass the 1995 Telecommunications and Development Act passed in Georgia.

Glenwood Telephone Company prospered and improved under Mrs. O'Brien's leadership and technological upgrades continued into the next century. In 1996, toll-free calling was implemented by the company to Mount Vernon and Vidalia, Ga. In 1998, the company opened a new business office and in 2000 an internet service provider division of the company was established.

Mrs. O'Brien, a visionary, understood the importance of internet to the future of communications and customers. In 2004, GTC applied for and was awarded the USDA/RUS Community Connectivity Broadband Grant program which jump-started the DSL services in the City of Glenwood and the rest of Glenwood Telephone Company's ILEC footprint. The EWSD was replaced with Metaswitch in 2010 to further facilitate technological improvements. In 2019, Mrs. O'Brien began the engineering and design work necessary for Fiber to the Home (FTTH) services and the company broke ground for that enhancement in 2020.

Complementing her accomplishments in the telecom industry, Mrs. O'Brien was on the board of the Wheeler County Chamber of Commerce and she was dedicated to promoting and advocating for economic development in Wheeler County and Region 9 of Georgia. She was nominated by former Speaker of the House, Glen Richardson, to the Heart of Georgia Regional Commission and she served as a Trustee of Brewton Parker College. Mrs. O'Brien was genuinely interested in supporting the area's residents and she always looked for opportunities to improve the economic conditions in what was one of the poorest areas in Georgia.

Upon Mrs. O'Brien's death in 2021, Glenwood Telephone Company's ownership was passed to her son, Jim O'Brien. Under his capable leadership, the company has continued to thrive and provide excellent telecommunications and internet service to its community citizens. Glenwood Telephone Company, now a third generation-owned and operated company, is the smallest independent local exchange carrier in Georgia.



About Glenwood Telephone Company

Founded in 1898, Glenwood Telephone Company was bought and sold to several families. In 1943, L. B. Adams, commonly known as "Telephone Adams" purchased Glenwood Telephone Company. At the time, the company was providing service to only 33 subscribers who were paying \$1.50 per month for residential service and \$2.50 per month for business service. They collected a sum total of \$56 during their first month of ownership. The switchboard they purchased was located in a home, which the Adams renovated and moved into. Mrs. Adams was responsible for keeping the switchboard open 24x7. The front room of the home became the company's business office and was also a social hub for the town. While the company provided a tremendous benefit to the community, it was not profitable enough for the Adams family to support the family, and Mr. Adams was forced to take on other jobs, in addition to maintaining the telephone company's facilities.

The family persevered and in 1956 they borrowed \$7,292.45 to purchase a Stromberg-Carlson XY Magneto Switch which would allow them to expand their customer base to 120 lines. In that same year, the company's business office was moved to a dedicated space.

The Adams family continued to provide expanded and improved services to their customers through the years. In 1982, Janice E. O'Brien, the oldest Adams daughter, became the new owner and CEO of the company when her parents deceased.

The company continued to invest in improvements and expand its services under her leadership. In 1990 a new Stromberg-Carlson DCO switch was installed and the company added 13 miles of fiber optic cable, which at the time was a very forward-thinking decision.

In 2002 the company went digital when a Siemens EWSD ONE UP switch capable of serving 1216 lines was installed. In 2003, Glenwood Telephone Company was awarded a \$319.5K grant which enabled the implementation of 3 Mbps Down/1Mbps up "broadband" service to the City of Glenwood.

In December 2020, Glenwood Telephone Company provided FTTH (fiber to the home) service to its first customer.

When CEO Janice O'Brien passed away after a brief illness in 2021, her son Jim O'Brien became the owner and CEO of the company. The company is still operated as a family-owned family-operated business.

Source: <https://www2.gtconline.com/history/>

About Chesnee Telephone Company

Chesnee Telephone Company (now Chesnee Communications) dates back to 1910 when E. F. Wall installed a Western Electric magneto type switchboard in his home. The switchboard and exchange changed hands several times over the next couple of decades until Harold and Pansy Askins bought and incorporated the company in 1932.

Instead of moving the switchboard they purchased, the Askins family made some renovations to the home where it was then located and the family moved into the home. The company provided 24x7 service except on Sundays when the switchboard was closed from 9:30AM to 2PM and from 6PM to 9PM so that company employees could attend church.

Back in the day, charges for long distance calls were calculated manually and details of the call and charges were written by hand on customer bills. The bills were delivered by a company employee and occasionally the customers paid the amount due to employee who delivered the bill.

In 1949, with a loan from the REA (Rural Electrical Administration) a Stromberg-Carlson XY dial switch was purchased. It was the first dial system in the county and had the capacity to serve about 400 lines. The new dial switch ushered in the era of 4-digit numbering. In 1954, the company received another REA loan to construct lines to rural areas so that party line service could be offered. The party lines, which were often shared by up to 10 families, allowed rural customers to enjoy telephone service for the first time.

In 1962, a new switch was installed and 10-party lines were replaced with 2-party line service. Some customers even had one-line service. In the late 60's the company borrowed nearly \$1.5 million from the REA to extend and upgrade service and to offer free local service from Chesnee to Spartanburg. The company also introduced car phones, the first mobile devices during that time.

In 1968, Automatic Numbering Identification was activated and customers could dial long distance calls directly without the assistance of an operator.

By 1976, Chesnee's equipment had been upgraded to allow all customers to have a private line with touchtone service. Technological improvements occurred frequently for the next several decades. Today, Chesnee provides telephone, television and high-speed internet service to more than 3,400 customers. In 2021, Chesnee was purchased by Comporium, a Rock Hill, SC communications Company.

Source: *Chesnee Telephone Company 75th Anniversary Memory Book* and *Chesnee Communications Becomes Part of the Comporium Family*

Inaugural Telephone Hall of Fame Inductee Arthur Frank Adams



Arthur F. Adams
January 3, 1981— March 28, 1958

Arthur F. Adams, a native of Auroraville, Wisconsin began his telephony career at Berlin Telephone Company (Wisconsin) when at 17 years old he accepted a position as a lineman. Adams held various management and engineering positions in the telephone industry and in 1905 he became a vice president at Home Telephone Co. in Joplin, Missouri.

In 1907 Adams joined Gary Investment Company and was instrumental in organizing and expanding telephone operating companies and manufacturing companies in the United States and internationally. Under his leadership, the Automatic Electric Co. supplied the first dial equipment used by the Bell System in 1919.

Adams went on to serve as Chairman of the Board of Theodore Gary & Company and Telephone Bond & Share Company, President of Associated Telephone and Telegraph Company and the Automatic Electric Company and was an officer or director of nearly all of the corporations in The Gary Group. Adams served in Washington during World War II as a member of The General Operating Board that directed the efforts of The Telephone and Telegraph systems in the U. S. He was also Chairman of the Commerce Trust Company of Kansas City from 1923 to 1926. Adams retired on Jan. 18, 1955. Adams was posthumously inducted into the Telephone Hall of Fame in 1965.

2021 Hall of Fame Inductee C. Wayne Peterson



D. Wayne Peterson is the most recent Telephone Hall of Fame inductee, inducted in 2021.

Peterson's telephony career, which spanned 40 years, began at Southwestern States Telephone Company (later known as Southwestern Bell) in 1957.

Peterson was recruited in 1968 by United Telecommunications, Inc. as Assistant Vice President-Revenues and was later promoted to VP-Marketing. Peterson was 44 years old when he was appointed as CEO and president of Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company. He was a visionary and led the company into the new world of digital and fiber optic technology.

In 1993 Peterson became head of Sprint's Local Telecommunication Division in Kansas City, MO. In 1997 he was appointed as president of National Integrated Services and he served in that role until his retirement.

Peterson is well known for his award-winning Quality Circle Program which began at Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company in 1981 with a steering committee and six pilot circles. By 1993 there were more than 100 circles, and the company's annual one-week Quality Conference was attended by more than 2,000 employees. That program became a model for other telecommunications companies.

Peterson has been dedicated to community service. He has served on the boards of 14 civic organizations, 10 educational institutions, several non-profit organizations and three banks.

Peterson also served for six years on the board of governors of the University of North Carolina Systems. His numerous awards include the Commander's Award for Public Service, which is the highest U. S. Army civilian award.

A staunch supporter of Pioneering, Peterson encouraged the Carotel Club's purchase of two Smokehouses for educating school children in fire safety with the slogan that became popular: "Stop, Drop and Roll." Company vehicles transported the houses to various events around North Carolina.

Peterson was a hands-on participant remembered for saying, "Wait for me. I'm your leader!" He and his wife Billie Ann, now reside in Pinehurst, NC.

Those who came before....Previous Telephone Hall of Fame Inductees

The Telephone Hall of Fame was founded in 1965 to recognize individuals for outstanding accomplishments in the telecom. Individuals inducted into the Telephone Hall of Fame have personally impacted and made significant contributions to their work places, the telecom industry and to their communities.

Telephone Hall of Fame inductees have made positive and substantial contributions to the development, growth, and public perception of the telephone industry on a national scale over a period of many years. Nominees eligible for this honor must have reached the age of 70, be retired from the industry for at least three years, or be deceased.

2023 Telephone Hall of Fame honorees Janice Adams O'Brien and Hannah Askins Lancaster join the following esteemed individuals on the Hall of Fame Honor Roll, listed in order based on year of induction:

Arthur F. Adams	1965	Harold V. Bozell	1970	James J. Clerkin, Jr.	1988
Edwin M. Blakeslee	1965	Charles S. Cadwell	1970	William F. Corman	1989
Edward C. Blomeyer	1965	Luther W. Hill	1970	Richard A. Lumpkin	1990
John P. Boylan	1965	Ralph C. Reno	1971	Weldon W. Case	1991
Theodore Gary	1965	Clyde S. Bailey	1972	Robert M. Pirnie, Jr.	1991
Herman E. Hageman	1965	Ralph F. Lucier	1972	Paul H. Henson	1992
Gustav Hirsch	1965	William C. Henry	1973	Warren B. French, Jr.	1993
Milo G. Kellogg	1965	Carl A. Scupin	1973	John F. O'Connell	1993
F. B. MacKinnon	1965	Hiram D. Fargo	1974	Sigurd L. Odegard	1993
Frank R. McBerty	1965	Donald C. Power	1975	Raymond M. Alden	1994
Houck McHenry	1965	John A. Balch	1976	Phillip J. Lucier	1994
Alfred Stromberg	1965	Carl D. Brorein	1976	Robert W. Bunke	1995
Almon S. Strowger	1965	Chester H. Loveland	1976	Wilson B. Garnett	1995
Frank H. Woods	1965	Talbot G. Martin	1976	Frank S. Barnes, Jr.	1996
Mayme Workman	1965	John E. Ostline	1977	James E. Geist	1996
John H. Wright	1965	George B. Quatman	1977	Robert S. McClelland	1997
John H. Agee	1966	Otto Wettstein, Jr.	1977	Frank D. Reese	1997
Frank F. Bohn	1966	Frank S. Barnes, Sr.	1980	Carl F. Bailey	1998
Burgie L. Fisher	1966	John G. Reynolds	1980	John M. Barnes	1999
Charles F. Mason	1966	Leslie H. Warner	1980	Alexander G. Bell	1999
James M. Thomas	1966	Ray Blain	1981	Jack C. Keen	2000
Clyson I. Brown	1967	John Brown Cook	1981	Donald L. Hirt	2001
Raymond H. Burfiend	1967	Wesley H. Loomis, III	1981	Roland G. Nehring	2001
Joseph Harris	1967	Francis X. Welch	1981	Ray H. Smith	2013
John K. Johnston	1967	Hugh A. Barnhart	1982	Clarke M. Williams	2014
Harry P. Mahoney	1967	Loren M. Berry	1982	Glenn E. Bryant	2015
John R. Porter	1967	Leonard D. Densmore	1983	Edwin L. Barnes	2016
William G. Brorein	1968	H. Milton Stewart, Sr.	1983	Robert E. Stoffels	2016
Max McGraw	1968	R. Parker Sullivan	1983	Joe T. Ford	2017
J. Ballard Atherton	1969	Josey K. Galloway	1984	Dean Swanson	2018
Henry A. Barnhart	1969	Douglas S. Guild	1984	James E. McCartney	2019
Wallace I. Cook	1969	H. Dail Holderness	1985	Eleanor G. Haskin	2020
Peter M. Ferguson	1969	C. Paul Stocker	1985	D. Wayne Peterson	2021
Alden L. Hart	1969	Hugh R. Wilbourn, Jr.	1986	Hannah Askins Lancaster	2023
Charles H. North	1969	Harold G. Payne	1987	Janice Adams O'Brien	2023

Rocky Sighting at Spring Assembly Location!



The ITPA's **31st Annual Assembly** will be held in picturesque Hinesville, GA this year, where some activities and events will be located at our national office and the ITPA Telephone Museum. Our mascot Rocky the Squirrel has been traveling incognito recently, but after hearing reports that he had been spotted on the grounds of the ITPA National Office and Museum, the paparazzi waited patiently to catch him on camera, and they were not disappointed. Although he seems to be playing "I spy" in this photo.

ITPA Executive Director Alissa Moss confirmed that Rocky has indeed been at the national office overseeing some of the preparations for the upcoming assembly. He has extended a cordial invitation to all Pioneers and guests to join him for what will undoubtedly be an entertaining and enjoyable weekend.

Friday's agenda will include a meet and greet dinner, followed by our opening ceremony. Saturday will include an exciting side trip to historic Savannah, Georgia. For those who did not sign up for the historic Savannah Old Trolley tour, there will be fun and games, with cash and prizes, for those who remain in Hinesville.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

You still have time to submit information and photos about your club/chapter gatherings, events and activities that can be included in the May 2023 Pioneer Connection. The next issue will also include updates from the annual assembly, a list of officers, Club/Chapter Project award winners, and more! Don't miss it!