

Obituary for Robert Philip Murray, PhD – Gerry O’Hara

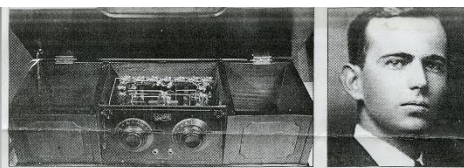
It is with great sadness that the Canadian Vintage Radio Society (CVRS) announces the passing of Dr. Robert (Bob) Murray.

Bob was born in Prince Edward Island on August 10, 1944, and passed away after a life devoted to research, teaching, family, and community. Raised in Quebec and Montreal, he held a B.A. degree from McGill University and M.A. and Ph.D degrees from the University of Manitoba. His Ph.D thesis was on Experimental Social



Psychology. He married his beloved wife, Dr. Eileen Murray, in 1968, beginning a partnership that spanned more than fifty years.

Bob built a distinguished career in research and academia, working with Bell Canada, the Manitoba government, the University of Manitoba, and the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, where he served as Director of Research. Internationally respected for his work in smoking cessation, public health, and alcohol research, he co-led the landmark Lung Health Study funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health and authored numerous scholarly publications. Bob had over 150 scientific articles, book chapters and abstracts to his credit, and one book. On retirement, Bob moved to Vancouver with his wife Eileen.



Among the most significant donations to the museum was the 'Rogers Batteryless,' a landmark line of radios invented by Edward Rogers, right, the father of communications mogul Ted Rogers.

Museum lands vintage set of radios from pivotal era

Collection includes 1925 'Rogers Batteryless' that plugged Canada into a media revolution

BY RANDY BOSWELL

The National Museum of Science and Technology has acquired a rare collection of antique radios — including a 1925 plug-in model that helped transform a hobbyist's lonely pursuit into a national communications craze.

communications mogul Ted Rogers. Edward Rogers pioneered the idea in Canada that radios could be powered not only by large exterior batteries, but also by electricity from household circuits, allowing a receiver to become a stylish part of the furniture and thus a 'muse-

control" when he spotted the historic treasure on a shelf in the store. "At that point, you just want to get it to the counter and get out."

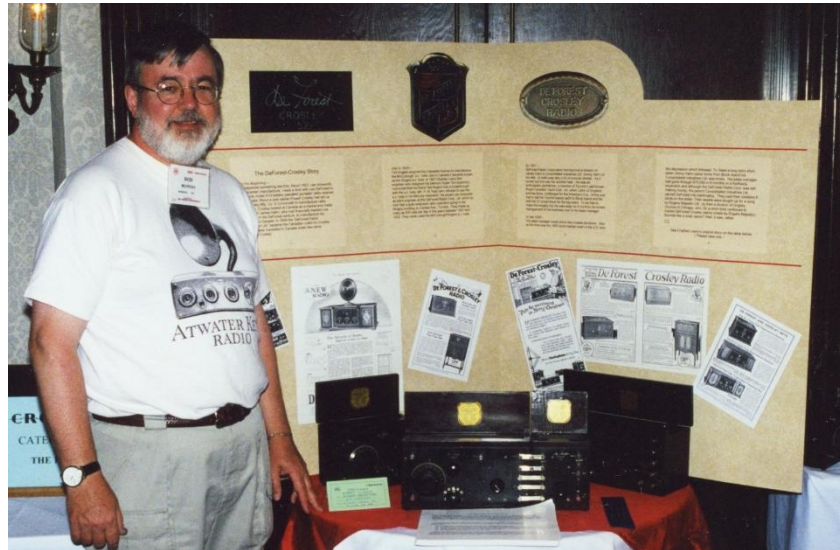
"You have to remember," he adds, "that when this radio was being sold, people were still amazed that voices could come out of the air."

He thinks he paid something like \$200 for the radio. That's not much more than it would have sold for now in 1925 —

Outside his professional life, Bob was deeply passionate about antique radios, Canadian broadcasting history, steam engines, and wooden boats. A dedicated collector, restorer, writer, and editor, he edited and published *'The Early Development of Radio in Canada, 1901–1930'*, and served for many years as editor of the American Antique Wireless Association (AWA) Review. After

retiring to Vancouver in 2007, he became an active volunteer with the SPARC radio Museum (SPARC Museum) in Coquitlam, and the SS Master Society.

Bob's interest in radio history began in the mid-1970's when he bought an early radio and horn speaker from a graduate school classmate. His continued search for Canadian-manufactured broadcast receivers led to an increasing awareness of the scarcity of historical information on these radios, resulting in his authorship of numerous articles for antique radio hobby publications.

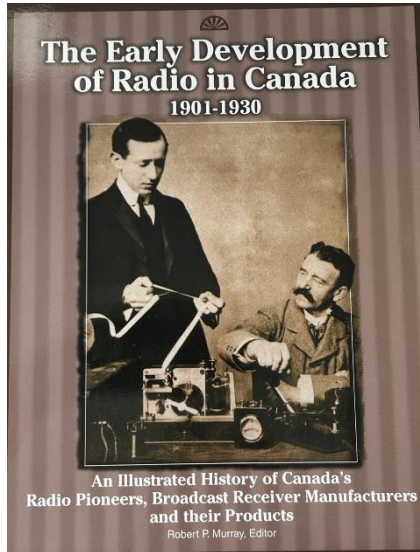


Early in his career, he was employed with the Canadian Bell System, where he became familiar with the Bell Canada Historical Collection that included the Northern Electric collection of records and artefacts. Bob's first historical article was a result of his access to that collection. After 25 years of collecting, Bob donated a significant amount of his Canadian radio artefacts to the Canada Science and Technology Museum in Ottawa.



Bob's attention to detail and accuracy were invaluable during his volunteer work at the SPARC Museum, where he was instrumental in re-setting the 'Carpathia Display' (photo, left) – a reproduction of the ship's radio room in the Carpathia, a vessel associated with the Titanic disaster. His contributions made this display one of the gems of the Museum. This room was subsequently

used as a set in a Titanic movie. Bob researched some of the older equipment owned by the Museum, including a 1910 radio system, and donated a homebrew spark transmitter and a CD player that ran for years with a Spark Gap recording of the CQD message that was sent out by the Titanic. He also wrote up all the information that was subsequently printed on cardstock to help the public understand what they were looking at in the display. Another Museum volunteer noted *"It was so easy working with Bob, and we were happy to see the reactions of visitors to the revitalized Carpathia room"*. In addition, Bob donated part of his collection of early Canadian radios to SPARC around a decade ago, including several rare Northern Electric models from the 1920's.



'The Early Development of Radio in Canada 1901 – 1930' – an illustrated history of Canada's radio pioneers, broadcast receiver manufacturers and their products, was edited by Bob and published in 2005. This book provides a valuable resource about the early years of Canada's radio industry, and is a compilation of fourteen articles reprinted with permission by several authors, and offers a wealth of knowledge about the individuals and organizations who pioneered wireless technology in Canada. Bob also produced an illustrated electronic (pdf) guide to Canadian radios of the 1920's.

Despite living for many years with diabetes and later health challenges, Bob remained intellectually curious, generous, and deeply devoted to family and friends. He will be remembered for his quiet determination, warmth, humor, and lifelong love of

learning. He is survived by his wife Eileen, his sister Florence, extended family, friends and colleagues. A 'Celebration of Life' for Bob with family and friends invites was held in Vancouver on Saturday, May 23.

From a personal perspective, I fondly recall having many interesting and valuable conversations with Bob at the Burnaby BC meetings of the CVRS, where we both gave presentations to other Members, and at the SPARC Museum. Bob encouraged me to review papers for the AWA Review and also to submit one of my own on an Eddystone AW2 receiver several years ago. Fred Freer, the current AWA Journal editor, noted that the 1,600 members of the AWA appreciate the privilege and honor of sharing of Dr. Robert Murray's life accomplishments and contributions, noting [Bob's] "*was clearly a life well-lived*". An obituary will be published in the AWA Journal later in 2026.

