

In Memoriam: Thomas I. Harris



Thomas I. Harris, founder of Optical Research Associates (ORA) and co-inventor of CODE V®, passed away 16 January at age 90.

Harris grew up in Madison, Wisconsin. Inspired by high-school science and physics teachers, he attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he majored in physics. There, he developed a fascination with optics and astronomy.

Following graduation, Harris studied with Rudolph Kingslake and Bob Hopkins at the University of Rochester. Completing his Master's there in 1953, he joined Bell & Howell and spent the next 10 years working on projects such as computerizing third order and ray trace calculations. In 1963, after being transferred to southern California, Harris founded ORA, now the Optical Solutions Group at Synopsys.

When Harris established ORA, the company focused on lens design and on developing the program that would eventually become [CODE V](#). The program's powerful capability to do optimization, analysis, and tolerancing of image-forming optical systems and free-space photonics is now used by scientists and researchers around the world.

Tom served for 11 years as Treasurer of SPIE-The International Society of Optical Engineering and in other capacities for both the Optical Society of America and SPIE. He holds five patents and has published numerous papers on optical design. He is a Fellow of both Societies and has received honors over the years, including the OSA Joseph Fraunhofer Award in 1990, SPIE's Presidents Award in 1992, and co-recipient (with Darryl) of the SPIE Technology Achievement Award for the development of CODE V in 1984. In 1995 he was made a Life Member of SPIE.