

Martin “Marty” Cooper Father of the Cell Phone

About the Keynote Speaker:



Marty Cooper famously led the Motorola team that developed the first mobile cellular telephone. He led the regulatory effort that resulted in a competitive cellular service that could serve handheld portable cell phones, a model adopted by most countries. Marty graduated from the Illinois Institute of Technology with a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering in 1950 and served in the Navy during the Korean conflict. He joined Motorola in 1954. He earned a master’s in electrical engineering (1957) and received an Honorary Doctorate from IIT where he serves as a Life Trustee. At Motorola, Marty and his teams created the Pageboy II, the first nationwide high capacity paging system (1970), and the first public land-mobile trunked radio system (1973) as well as numerous wireless innovations. He became a division manager and ultimately served a vice president and director of research (1978–83) for the company.

3 April 1973: Marty introduced the DynaTAC phone at a press conference in New York City. To make sure that it worked before the press conference, he placed the first public cell-phone call, to Joel Engel, head of AT&T Bell Labs rival project, and gloated that he was calling from a portable cellular phone. After a decade of further development and resolving regulatory challenges, Motorola introduced the first portable cell phone for consumers, the DynaTAC 8000x in 1983.

Marty then left Motorola to co-found Cellular Business Systems, Inc. (CBSI), which became the leading company in billing cellular phone services. In 1986 he and his partners sold CBSI to Cincinnati Bell for \$23 million. Marty and his wife, Arlene Harris, then founded Dyna, LLC, the central organization from which they launched other companies including ArrayComm (developed multi-antenna arrays for wireless systems), and GreatCall (created the Jitterbug a cell phone with its large buttons and simple features meant for the elderly, recently sold to Samsung).

Widely recognized for his technical leadership, entrepreneurial and business achievements, and his inventions and publications, other achievements include: Life IEEE Fellow, IEEE VTS President, IEEE Centennial Medal (1984), Charles Star Draper Prize (2013), Prince Asturias Award for Scientific and Technical Research (2009), Marconi Prize (2013). He is also widely known for introducing the “Law of Spectral Efficiency” now known as “Cooper’s Law”.