

## Appreciation of Mr. David Buell

Few men can boast of such a proud record of achievement in one short life-time as the boy from Jaffna who rose to the height of his profession in his chosen field – Broadcasting. Almost from his infancy will occupy a prominent place when the history of broadcasting comes to be written.

David Buell was born on 12th September 1923. His father, Mr. Robert Buell, was the National Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. He was not the ordinary nominal Sunday 'Christian but a devout one who practiced the presence of the Master at all times. Born out of a total commitment to his faith he brought along with him to the SLBC noble qualities such as love, unselfishness, loyalty and integrity.

David grew to be a well-disciplined conscientious student at Royal College, displaying skills in engineering at quite an early age. He achieved distinction in the exams he took up, obtaining the degree of B.Sc., Honours, Engineering (London) M.Sc. (Bristol) and the A.M.I.E.E. He also received practical training at the B.B.C. and specialized, in transmitters. David did not make vain boast of his academic and professional attainments. His delight was to walk humbly. David Buell was associated with broadcasting since the days of Colombo Radio and South East Asia Command, which he joined as a young man in 1948 as a Technical Assistant

The technicalities of radio broadcasting and communication fascinated him and he devoted all his time and energies towards achieving knowledge and competence in his chosen field.

Thirty years is a fair slice of a man's life and David gave it all ungrudgingly to the cause of broadcasting. His honesty was beyond question and it was primarily because of this that he was entrusted with the taking over of the station at Ekala, and at all critical periods his services were heavily relied upon. He was not guided by promotions, rewards and the like, but labored meticulously in order to discharge his duties faithfully. It is an irony to find that David, who did much to develop the technical side of the S.L.B.C. never grabbed a mike or got behind it. He shunned the limelight and avoided indulging in idle purposeless gossip. He knew exactly when to speak and when to withhold his speech, recognizing achievements by deeds. Being a man of quiet disposition, sober habits and simple ways, he was never conscious of the position he held. He moved with the highest and the lowest with consummate ease, helping many to help themselves

In 1965- A VHF relay station was established at UdaRadella by Mr. David Buell who was Engineer Transmitters and in 1969 he was in charge of constructing F.M. transmitting at Deniyaya. 1975- An experimental FM **Stereo** broadcast to cover the Colombo district in addition to the pilot project for the city was initiated by Mr. David Buell from the VHF room in Colombo. He was in charge of the construction work of the Medium Wave station at Diyagama. Later he was responsible of the installation of the first regional transmitter at Anuradhapura. The story is related that when the transmitter was being installed at Ampara his services were required for advice on a technical matter. He arrived at Ampara the very next morning by train to give the officer in charge of construction work his expert advice. On another occasion when his service were required in Jaffna he arrived by train to give the matter his prompt attention.

Being a conscientious and hardworking man, he expected the same high standard from his subordinates. He was intolerant of carelessness and inefficiency something he never countenanced. The story is told that he found a technical officer at the bus-stand and gave him a lift in his car to the transmitting station. As the officer was late to work, his first action on arriving at his desk, was to send a letter to the officer call- explanation for coming late to work. His iron discipline was always tempered by his great understanding and sympathy. As one of his own officers said, "He was a very simple and unassuming

gentleman. A very soft spoken man at all times. He spoke so very little that we, his subordinates knew very little about him".

David played a very active part in the initial stages to install T.V. in this country. He took a personal interest in the project and travelled to various parts of the ' country, to determine the best possible location for the T.V. transmitter

David Buell. The Director (Engineering) Of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation too, went up into the mountain. He did so in obedience to the call of duty On the Sabbath morning of June 10th , and even as he neared the end of his climb he turned around to his assistance and said " Only a little distance " more. How real, how true his words proved to be for a few paces later, death came to David silently as he kept walking. in a minutes it was all over.

He Slipped through the life in just the way he had lived.