



South African Radio League Amateur Radio Hall of Fame

Dave Larsen ZS6DN Inducted in 2016

David V. Larsen ZS6DN was licenced as ZS5DN in 1951. He was born in 1933 and passed away in 2014.

Dave was a precocious youngster, building his own receivers at age 11. He was licensed at 18 and soon after became an apprentice in Horace Dainty's SMD in Durban. Dave combined his amateur radio experience with a sound technical understanding. Within five years, he was appointed a senior design engineer.

Dave was instrumental in the development of the Racal RA17, of which thousands were sold to world wide military customers in the Fifties. The radio was based on a South African innovation, the Wadley Loop. The RA17 was the first and largest implementation of the principle.

Dave's most famous innovation was the first practical frequency hopping radios. Dave also pioneered the use of sweep transistors in making affordable high-power final amplifiers. He used the precedent of sweep tube amplifiers then widely being used by radio amateurs to develop the first workable modular finals.

In the early days of SSB, Dave and his brother Roy (then ZS5QU, later ZS4T and ZS6QU) were active in encouraging SSB operations by other South African amateurs.

Dave strongly supported a range of research efforts by South Africans. His 50 MHz beacons provided the impetus for meteor scatter research that resulted in the world's first commercial meteor scatter data system. His 50 and 144 MHz beacons also supported the pioneering trans-equatorial research efforts by Fred Anderson ZS6PW and others, and world ionospheric distance record on 144 MHz for Dave.

After retirement David Larsen set up an experimental radio station with a laboratory on his farm, Salbu, near Pretoria. Various research projects turned into viable systems, most notably a meteor scatter communications system and an UMTS-based system using opportunity-driven multiple access technology. In recognition of his immense contributions to radio technology the South African Government honoured him with its Order of the Star of South Africa, Officer Class, in 1989.

He was a trustee and sponsor of the South African Amateur Radio Development Trust.



Dave supported the NCDXF's International Beacon Project, by hosting the multi-frequency beacon ZS6DN/B. The beacons have continuously provided propagation indications for more than two decades.

In his honour the family continues to sponsor the beacon operation which on their behalf is managed by Frank Schneider ZS6GE. The beacons still use the callsign ZS6DN with the license being held by the SARL.

