uth African Radio League

ateur Radio Hall of Fame

Frans Durand ZS4FD

Inducted in 2022



Frans Johannes Lodewyk Durand was an upstanding and proud member of the South African Radio League. He received his call sign ZS4FD on 1 September 1982.

During his professional career at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), and later SENTECH, he maintained a high regard for amateur radio. During the last 20 years of his SENTECH career, he was stationed in Kroonstad. From there, he was well known as the friendly, patient mentor to many radio amateurs. He was an on-off member of the SARL until 16 April 1993. Since then, he was a proud, uninterrupted SARL member until he passed away in 2021.

1988 saw tremendous widespread floods in South Africa. Frans used his influence at SABC to lead a team of radio amateurs who established critical communications between Kimberley and Bloemfontein, under the HAMNET banner, and using the SABC's news distribution network. He was directly at the Communication Command Centre at the Maselspoort Dam that broke its wall. Coordination from the CCC managed the SA Army, Disaster teams and radio clubs.

Mr Durand, or rather “oom Frans”, touched many lives. The most relevant role he played was to initiate and open the SANTECH high sites agreement that allowed radio amateur clubs to install repeaters on any SANTECH-controlled towers. Further to this, he recognised the need for the SARL to have an operational building. Through his influence and initiating the agreement processes, Frans introduced and ensured that the current SARL headquarters would be built at Radiokop, Honeydew, Johannesburg. On 27 August 1998, the SARL and SANTECH signed the 30-year lease agreement with Neel Smuts of SENTECH.

Over the years, Frans was a member of various clubs. His impact towards the betterment of amateur radio was felt by everyone at the SARL branches, such as the Free State SARL Branch and the Magalies Radio Club.

Since the late nineties, he has been part of the Sasolburg Radio Club. Many clubs would call on his expertise when repeater cavity tuning and repeater installations were needed. A number of these clubs have also acknowledged his contributions by giving him awards.

From 1999 to 2001, he was a key player in the SKA-project planning team. His task and measurements of the Karoo would lead to South Africa winning the International bid to establish the Square Kilometre Array radio telescope network in the Calvina/Karoo area.

The Sasolburg Radio Club bestowed Honorary Membership on him on 22 May 2006. He designed, developed and ensured the club had the best linked repeater networks in the northern Free State.

The Jack Twine Merit Award of the SARL was bestowed on him for all the positive work and club contributions he gave to amateur radio.

Oom Frans passed away on 21 July 2021. He left behind his second wife, Yvonne, children and many grandchildren.