

Biographical Sketch

Ken Davies SMPTE Engineering Vice-President

A new breed of pioneer has been established in the television industry. In the spirit of the industry's forefathers, SMPTE Engineering Vice-President Ken Davies has participated in many projects that have shaped the motion-imaging field that is emerging today.

"I've been at the pioneer level of a number of things that are now taken for granted," Davies notes. In his 42-year career in broadcasting, Davies has been involved in the development of such technologies as time code editing, videotape post-production, multilayer video processing, and digital video production. This work has been accomplished both as a user and a designer and manufacturer, giving him a special perspective of the needs, opportunities, and possibilities for the expanding constituency that the SMPTE serves.

Professional History

Davies spent his early years in England, where his father worked as a mechanical engineer for DeHavilland Airplane Corp., which helped to shape his current interests. "My interest in engineering began when I was ten years old," he said. "I liked the idea of working with people to solve problems, and the order and precision of science. Engineers, no matter what their discipline, learn an organized and rational approach to problem solving."

During high school his family moved to Canada, and Davies later attended McGill University, graduating in 1957 with a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering and Honors in Communication, as well as five years of experience at VEZUN, the University's amateur radio station.

"When I graduated from McGill, commercial television was just coming to Canada," Davies recalls. "I went to work at Canadian Marconi Co.'s Broadcasting Division,



Ken Davies

CFCF+CFCF-TV, which was developing Channel 12, one of the first television stations in the area."

It was during this time that Davies designed and installed sound recording and mixing equipment, conducted the preliminary studio and transmitter design, designed and constructed multichannel stereo mixing and dubbing consoles, and created the first videotape post-production house within a television station. Channel 12 went on the air in 1959. "What we were doing was extremely new," Davies notes. "Many of my co-workers later took what we learned there and went on and started their own company, which was known as Editel."

Davies left the Canadian Marconi Corp. in 1963 and went to Central Dynamics, Ltd. (CDL), to join John Ross in the pioneering work in solid-state television equipment. He was later named vice-president of product planning. "During this time, fully solid-state production and distribution equipment moved from the laboratory to everyday use and became the accepted norm for reliability and utility," Davies said. "TV station automation and post-production were created and advanced from simple hardware systems to sophisti-

cated software packages running on minicomputers and later microcomputers. These production systems rapidly developed into the multilayer equipment that is common today."

In 1977 he took a position at the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. (CBC), returning to the user community. He remains at CBC, the public broadcaster of Canada, currently holding the title of director of the standards and technology development department at engineering headquarters. In this capacity he is focused on digital production, distribution, and broadcasting for both radio and television, and guides the development of related standards and regulation.

In his current ATV activities, he leads the team that developed and certified the technical facilities at the Ottawa Advanced Television Evaluation Laboratory (ATEL).

Davies and the SMPTE

Davies joined the SMPTE in 1961 at the urging of his friend and co-worker, the late Mike Barlow. "Mike and I worked together at Channel 12. At the time, the Society was sparse in the Canadian region and he convinced me that it would be a great idea to participate in the SMPTE. We were doing pioneer work and thought it would be great to share a very rewarding experience with the SMPTE. It is a special Society."

Since joining the Society, Davies has been instrumental in a number of SMPTE activities. He has held numerous positions in the Montreal/Quebec Section, working on conference arrangements from 1960 to 1972.

He has also served as chairman on several engineering committees, including the Working Group on Digital Video (1981-1984), the Task Force on Digital Video (1981-1982),

and the TV Technology Committee (1984-1988). From 1988 to 1992 he was the SMPTE Engineering Director, Television. He has been SMPTE Engineering Vice-President since January 1992.

In previous years he acted as topic chairman of 25th Annual Television Conference, held in 1991, where he organized a seminar on digital recording. In 1981 he was in charge of organizing and implementing the SMPTE Digital Video Demonstrations at the SMPTE TV Conference in San Francisco.

An SMPTE Fellow since 1981, Davies also serves on the Board of Governors and the Board of Editors of the *SMPTE Journal*, and is a member of the Television Reproduction and Recording Technology Committee and the Working Group on High Definition Electronic Production.

One of Davies most noted achievements within the Society is his organization of a worldwide discussion on digital standards in 1980. "At that time the U.S., Japan, and Europe all had nonconvergent proposals for digital video standards. The first thing we had to do was bring all participants face to face with the alternatives. We set up a series of side-by-side demonstrations of prototypes showing options and testing. The participants could see each unit in action, view the



A view of Kenbar Farm.



Davies at work on the farm.

quality, and rate the system. The result was a worldwide agreement on 525/625-line video standards, from which arose Rec. 125M and international standards CCIR 601 and 656."

Davies and his Role as SMPTE Engineering Vice-President

In his position as Engineering Vice-President, Davies plans to make sure that the Society actively meets the needs of its expanding constituency. "The SMPTE is recognized worldwide, but we've been parochial," he said. "It is important that we expand at the national level, bring in the computer-imaging field, and reach out to the international community to achieve consensus in standards of a worldwide scope."

His plans include interacting with other worldwide organizations. "We have liaison with other groups, such as the EBU, MPEG, and BTA, with whom we share a good deal of commonality," he said.

Since he has been in office Davies has initiated several modern procedures in the SMPTE Headquarters Engineering Department. His contributions include the implementation of the desktop publishing system and SEEC, the electronic network for conferencing that is available to all members. "It is important to try to use modern

business practices in our work," Davies notes. "The use of these practices makes us efficient as well as presents a change from an image of people sitting around a large desk conferencing, to an image that shows people hard at work using and looking at new technologies and standards, and making use of the technology that we're standardizing."

Davies said he also plans to continue to do what's always been done: promote and develop open standards so that industries can interchange equipment and program media.

Personal Background

Although his work with the CBC, SMPTE, and other international bodies takes up much of his time, Davies manages to find space for his hobbies, which include music, the theater, and his farm. In all of these he has an active and direct interest.

When at home, he lives with his wife Barbara, who is well known to many SMPTE members, on Kenbar Farm in Toledo, a small village near Ottawa, Canada, where he maintains a herd of pedigree Maine-Anjou beef cattle.

"Beware," he claims, "I am well qualified to recognize any bull in SMPTE work!"

— Carol King