

Denis A. Courtney, SMPTE Executive Director, to Retire 30 June



Denis A. Courtney, who has been Executive Director of the Society since 1968 and a member of the Headquarters staff since 1953, will retire 30 June 1979. His successor will be Donald F. Breidt who will be introduced in the July *Journal*.

Denis's first post when he joined the small Headquarters staff in 1953 was that of Assistant to Victor Allen (then Editor of the *SMPTE Journal* and Head of the Editorial Department until his retirement in 1975). In 1954, Denis took over the management of advertising — a new venture for the *Journal* — in addition to various other editorial responsibilities; then, as Advertising and Conference Manager, he began building up the Equipment Exhibits which have come to be a major feature of the Society's Technical Conferences.

While a member of the SMPTE Editorial staff, Denis worked closely with Boyce Nemeec, then Executive Secretary (designation of the post was later changed to that of Executive Director) and with Nemeec's successor, Colonel Charles S. Stodter, so that when the position became available in 1968, Denis had acquired considerable experience and a comprehensive understanding of SMPTE affairs and the requirements of the post, making his appointment an obvious choice and a wise move on the part of the Executive Committee. Advertising and conference coordination were left in the capable hands of Jeffrey Friedman.

During Denis's tenure, the Society has grown in size, in scope, and in resources and has inevitably changed extensively in character and direction with the changes in technology in the various fields it covers, presenting a vastly different picture from that of 1953. The Headquarters group has grown from some eight or nine employees to a staff of 27.

Having a close acquaintanceship over so long a period with many of the Society's outstanding personalities, Denis has seen 13 SMPTE Presidents come and go and is capable of giving candid assessments of all of them.

The ambience of SMPTE Headquarters reflects Denis's personality. The warmth, the genuine affection and respect that each employee has for the others, as well as their dedication to their allotted tasks is a tribute to Denis's quiet influence. Although many on the staff work under considerable pressure, during the eleven years Denis has been

in the head office, there have been few outbreaks of temperament and occasional crises have been dealt with calmly and competently. Each employee, even the newest, feels for Denis not only the respect due "the Chief" but also the affection due a friend. It has been a good eleven years.

Early Years and Future Plans

A British subject, born in Simla, India, Denis was graduated from Cambridge with B.A. and M.A. degrees and then continued his academic career with graduate studies at the Sorbonne and the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques, Paris. After a brief stint with EMI in England he came to the United States where he was a member of the British Ministry of Supply Mission in Washington, D.C., during the early stages of the war.

World War II was a time of decision for Denis. To become a citizen of the United States and to join the U.S. Army were not easy decisions to make, but apparently they have entailed no regrets whatsoever. He attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Army and spent four years in the postwar occupation of Germany.

Now at the end of his 26-year career with the SMPTE, Denis is planning a new career. He will make a full-time occupation of what has been one of his part-time avocations — the study and analysis, in architectural schools and in situ, of certain developments in medieval building styles. Before beginning a new full-time career, however, he will be off on a lengthy trip to India, which he has never had sufficient time to visit since leaving that country as an infant. — R.H.

SMPTE Journal's New Editor

David A. Howell was recently appointed Editor of the *SMPTE Journal*. He succeeds Thomas E. King who resigned to accept an appointment as Editor of the *RCA Engineer*.

In the mid-1950s Howell attended Amherst College where he majored in physics and minored in English. His Army career was spent at the Marshall Space Flight Center associated with Redstone Arsenal in Alabama.

Howell began his career in the Technical Information Service of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics in 1964. In 1969, he left his position there as Supervisor of the Abstracting Department to become Manager of Editorial Mechanics at the American Institute of Physics.

Beginning in the fall of 1972, when the SMPTE Headquarters was moved to Scarsdale, Howell served as freelance technical editor/writer for the *SMPTE Journal* and continued in this capacity until May 1974 when he joined the editorial staff. A year later when Victor Allen retired after a quarter-century career as *Journal* Editor, King succeeded as Editor and Howell became Assistant Editor.

During his seven-year association with the *Journal* he has been primarily concerned with technical manuscripts, working with both authors and reviewers for the Board of Editors to assure that the authors, the Society, and the state of the art are together well-served by the publication. In July 1975, the

Journal published a paper by Howell entitled "A Primer on Digital Television," which has been reprinted in a number of publications and appeared as the lead paper in SMPTE's 1977 book *Digital Video*.

Howell lives with his wife June and two sons Erik and Luke in a 150-year-old house that just misses having landmark status in the historic Quaker community of Chappaqua. In between seeking and editing papers for the *Journal* and enjoying his family, he pursues his interests in chess, astronomy, and the history of science.

In his new position, Howell will have responsibility for publishing the *SMPTE Journal* and other Society publications.