

Dan Riley

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Neil Daniel Riley (Dan) comes from an era where one of his first salary cheques, or better put, salary envelopes for the week ending 15 January 1959 was to the value of £3.56! At the time he was employed by electrical contractors, P.G.M. Magnusson, where he was completing his electrician apprenticeship.



Dan and Linda make the most of every opportunity to get away. Pictured here in the Wilderness.

Career History

One must realise that in 1970 it was not necessarily conventional to take a position in stage lighting. In South Africa a steadier career choice may have been teaching, working in a bank or joining a mine.



The early days, Danny with sons Bruce (in pool), Duncan (far right) and family friend Jose.

It's interesting to read Dan's Curriculum Vitae, to see what assignments he worked on. To think that while many of the current industry leaders, consultants and LD's were still in nappies at the time (or learning to walk), he was completing projects at the Bloemfontein Civic Theatre, Port Elizabeth Opera House, Klein Teatre - Windhoek, Alexander Theatre, Intimate Theatre and the Breytenbach Theatre

When the G E C Lighting Department was taken over by Rank Strand Electric in 1975, Dan was requested to move with the product Strand - a brand Dan became synonymous with over the years.

Work continued as normal, but the clientele increased with work also done at the Hexigon Theatre Pietermaritzburg, Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal, University of Pretoria, UNISA, University of Potchefstroom, Nico Malan Theatre, Baxter Theatre, Alambra Theatre and Market Theatre.

Then in around 1978 Rank Strand handed over distributorship to ACF Merchandising. Again Dan was asked to move with the Strand product. He did so and became involved in advising architects and consulting engineers regarding general stage lighting technicalities. Projects included the

Vereeniging Civic Theatre, Sun City, President Hotel, Landdrost Hotel and the Holiday Inn Maseru.



A passion for show-jumping, this photo of Dan was taken in 1972.

It was touch and go for Dan in 1979, where the industry could have lost him to the world of boreholes! Dan started his own company called "The Pump Doctor" fixing boreholes and performing general maintenance and electrical work. It didn't last long, around a year, after which he joined a company called Afitra.

Dan worked at Afitra, employed in a sales position. He imported and exported products to and from Israel, USA, Belgium (the ADB range), Holland and Germany. He assisted in customs and finance, and found agencies for products such as starter controls for motors, solar heaters, industrial dishwashers, security fencing, cables and even some stage lighting equipment. It was not his passion and he only stayed for a few years before going back to ACF Merchandising Zumtobel who then had the Strand agency.

Zumtobel sold their Strand agency to Calite, and Danny and Strand continued their walk together. Dan stayed at Calite from 1993 to 1998.. While Strand had progressed through the years and new products had entered the market, a new generation also evolved. They were the young Mick Landi (Shattered Glass), Mark Gaylard (MGG), Kurt du Preez (Upstage), Mike Jones (MJ Event Gear), Pierre Griffefon (Pure Sound) to name but a few. Some of them were starting off as mobile disco companies and hiring and buying equipment from Calite. All of them are now some of the most successful rental companies in SA and Dan watched and provided a service to them as they

grew in stature.

From 1999 to 2007 Dan was employed at Electrosonic SA. Danny had Strand come with him, and also played a role in getting the Compulite agency. He continued to serve the industry and being involved in sales and back-up.

Lourie Coetzee, owner of Electrosonic SA was once overheard saying, “Dan is a legend of his time in this field”. Perhaps this is true, but the truth also is that Dan wouldn’t want all the fuss and attention focussed on him.

Dan joined DWR Distribution in 2008 and it was been wonderful having him in the office. He is now retired.

Looking back though, his memories must be endless as he formed part of a special group of people who really love what they do, those they work with and an industry they served. It’s a vibrant industry with constant change, creative minds and where relationships still seem to count.

Dan the man

Always a constant, you can be assured that when you’re in Dan’s company you will be met with a huge smile. He may joke and tease, but there’s a sincerity and interest in what you are doing and how you have been keeping.



Linda and Dan

As a family man, there could be no better. Married to Linda, the couple fell in love when they both participated in show jumping – within six months they were married. They lived on a farm in Lammermoor, kept their horses and weekends were dedicated to shows... that is, until their two sons Duncan and Bruce came along. The boys were not interested in horses at all! Another family outlet had to be found. Dan and Linda bought motorbikes, and each parent drove with a child behind them.

After the bikes it was trying their sea feet with a rubber duck as they enjoyed trying their skiing skills or pulling a tube behind them. 4x4ing was also part of the fun.

These days, Dan is also known as “Grandan”, a much loved grandfather as well as a wonderful husband, special dad and father-in-love (law). He now lives permanently at Hartebeespoort Dam, where friends and family are always made welcome at their cottage and given a boat tour of the dam. You often see Danny and Linda shooting off on a jetski, and one thing is certain, they know how to live life to the full.

Dan trusts in Jesus as his anchor and through the years, along with Linda, has always helped those in need and have encouraged people they meet to have a positive outlook on life. You won't meet Danny without hearing laughter. It's his very nature that has made him so likeable and loved both at home and by the industry he loves too.

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