



Mel Simon WD5CAE - Silent Key

9/19/1940 - 12/29/2021

by Herman Campbell KN5GRK

It is with much sadness and a heavy heart that I have to inform you that our good friend and fellow amateur radio operator Mel Simon (WD5CAE) has become a *Silent Key* on December 29, 2021 at the age of 81. Mel was an active ham known by many in South Louisiana and was liked by everyone who knew him. If you happened to tune into 3.905 MHz during the early mornings or listened to the 145.410 repeater in New Iberia you probably heard Mel's friendly voice.

Mel was a 1959 graduate of Redemptorist High School in Baton Rouge. He worked as a salesman all of his life, and loved working with computers and operating his HAM radio (his handle was WD5CAE). He also enjoyed family get-togethers, and hosted a 4th of July party every year for the past 30 years, always serving rabbit stew!



If you went to a hamfest I am sure that you probably saw him sitting behind his swap table or either doing an "Eyeball" QSO with a fellow ham, or walking around taking pictures.

☞ There was no escaping Mel's camera which was active at many amateur radio social events in the area.

Mel's Accomplishments



Mel was first licensed in 1969 in Lafayette LA and his call was WN5NDX. Mel's company and family moved to Baton Rouge, and allowed his call to expire. Later he re-licensed with his son, Mel Jr., and both received call signs WD5CAE and WD5CAF.

Mel has one of the most beautiful set up ham shacks in the area and was very proud of showing it to any visitors wanting to see this work of art. Mel and Esther were very gracious hosts to all visitors with coffee and snacks.

Speaking of "art", Mel was famous for making "Ham Radio Plaques" similar this one during his "off" time. He was pretty handy with his router. He made probably around 200 and gave them to his many ham radio acquaintances without payment of any kind, all he wanted was a photo of the plaque in their "shack".



Mel was an "*Elmer*" to many new hams in the area and on many of the ham bands. If you were doing something wrong or breaking amateur radio rules, he would explain your errors in a nice friendly way as not to offend you, I know, because he corrected me many times. He enjoyed "rag chewing" and was a very good conversationalist on many subjects, especially Cajun food.

Some of the things that that Mel enjoyed and made him such a GREAT guy are listed on the next page.

- ◆ Mel was a long time member of the Acadiana Amateur Radio Association, Inc. (AARA) of Lafayette, Louisiana and the Bayou Emergency Amateur Radio Service (B.E.A.R.S.) of Morgan City, Louisiana.
- ◆ He participated in some of the Special Event Stations, mainly the Black Bear Festival in Franklin, Louisiana and Lighthouse Festival in Berwick, Louisiana.
- ◆ Esther and Mel enjoyed going to many of the area fairs, especially those where food was involved.
- ◆ Mel was instrumental in making arrangements in booking a private room for a monthly get-to-gather of local hams at Sicily's Pizza in Broussard, Louisiana.
- ◆ Whenever a ham radio operator needed advise or help with antenna or radio problems, Mel was there to help, he was very knowledgeable on antennas and many radio models. Buying, selling, and trading was up his alley.
- ◆ When a ham radio operator became a "Silent Key", Mel would help the widow dispose of his equipment by selling the equipment and getting her the best price.
- ◆ Mel attended most of the Louisiana and East Texas hamfests and usually had a swap table with equipment for sale. He always had a camera to take pictures of the swap tables and his many ham radio friends.
- ◆ Mel was Net Managers for the *Post Office Net* which meets on Sunday morning at 7:00 AM on 3905 KHz and the *Round Table Net* which meets daily on 3905 KHz at 6:00 AM. For a long time he was also a alternate net control station (NCS) on the Delta 75 Phone Net.
- ◆ Some of the radio nets that Mel daily participated on were: Louisiana Traffic Net, Texas Traffic Net, 7290 Traffic Net, Delta 75 Phone Net, Gulf Coast Sideband Net, Central Gulf Coast Hurricane Net, and some I am unaware of at this time.
- ◆ If you happen to drive through Lafayette and want someone to chat with or needed directions, you could usually find Mel on the 145.410 repeater in the New Iberia area.



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I am sure that you probably know more about Mel than I have mentioned above, but one thing I know is that he will be greatly missed by all.

Please keep the Simon family in your thoughts and prayers in this difficult time of loss.