

Russell Law - Domett Truck and Trailer Co Ltd

Russell Law is a Federation Life Member who, in the parlance of the day and in the opinion of those who worked with him, "ticked all the boxes."

He was an outstanding trailer designer and engineer who seamlessly combined the two disciplines to build some of the most innovative and resilient trailers of the 1950s through to his retirement in the 1980s.

He has been variously described as a visionary, a genius, a hard-nose and, universally, as a good bloke—professional, honest, and reliable.

But it is for his innovation and design skills that he is most remembered today. Much of the technology and engineering Russell conceived and instigated during his time in the industry, mostly for another of our legends Dave Domett for whom Russel worked as Chief Designer for much of his career, is still in use today.

It was Russell who gave us the self-steer semi-trailer; the steering spaced axle logging trailer, and we credit him with introducing the bottom dump semi-trailer—among many other innovations. Could he have done it without Dave Domett? Possibly not. People today who worked with both men say they made a great team. Dave was the driving force and had the resources, but it was Russell who is remembered as the innovator and to use that word again—the genius—behind Dometts.

Russell is also remembered as someone who gave something back to the wider road transport industry. He was a foundation member and first Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Road Transport Engineers, a member of the American Society of Automotive Engineers, and, for us in the TTMF, an invaluable member with great insight.

He was three times our President (1963—1965, 1971—1973, and 1977—1979) a role he served with distinction.

Wilfred Russell Law died 18 March 1988, aged 59 years, just one-year after retiring from what was then Domett Fruehauf.

The following year he was inducted and justly honoured as a TTMF Life Member.

