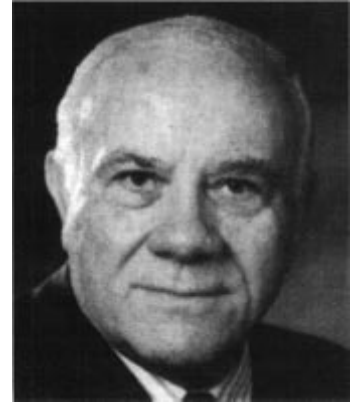


TRAGIC DEATH OF ROBERT BUSNEL

Robert Busnel, President of the International Basketball Federation until 1990, has just been killed with his wife in a tragic car accident

Robert Busnel, aged 77, was among the great leaders of world sport. After a long stint as one of the vice-presidents of the FIBA, he was elected President at the XII Congress held in Munich, the Federation's headquarters, in 1984. He was elected by acclamation to succeed Gonzalo Puyat of the Philippines. The new President of a federation which, two years earlier, had celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, Robert Busnel had to his credit a long and remarkable career in basketball. A brilliant player first of all, he won five national titles and wore the French national team vest on thirty-five occasions. After the war, he devoted many years to coaching. Under his firm guidance, the French team achieved in those years and on into the sixties a standard of organization and a quality of play which reflected all the determination and intelligence of its coach. The crowning moment came with the silver medal won by the French team he coached at the London Games in 1948. In 1956, he entered the FIBA, where he first took on a number of responsibilities in technical areas, the referees commission, relations with coaches, rules and regulations. In all these areas, he was to assert and acquire the leadership qualities recognized in France in 1966 when he was elected president of the national federation. Within the international bodies, he was entrusted with increasingly

important responsibilities. In 1976, he succeeded Nikolai Sematchko of the Soviet Union as president of the European zone, becoming a Vice-President of the FIBA. Then, in 1984, he became President. This election, the culmination of a life devoted to basketball, came at a time of profound change. The number of affiliated federations was growing fast and the increasing number of international matches made the search for financiers and sponsors a necessity. Robert Busnel tackled the job with gusto, making the most of an exemplary organization. His amiability and a sense of humour which rarely deserted him made him popular throughout the world.



He loved basketball and knew all its finer points, all its history. When the federation celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in Geneva in 1982, he traced a remarkable historical portrait, recalling the great periods of the game after the fashion of an art critic: "...after the pink period of a troubled and turbulent youth, where basketball was seeking its way, came the blue period of adolescence, when our sport became to an extent the victim of its own success. After a painful transition when the FIBA understood the need for a decisive change of direction, we enter the green period, colour of a new hope...". In this same speech, he remembered Renato Williams Jones, who had served the FIBA for years as its indefatigable Secretary-General, and whose great desire had been "...to hear always and for ever the thud of the balls, the swish of a successful basket, the referee's whistle and the shouts of the ecstatic crowd..." It is with these words that we conclude this last homage to Robert Busnel, as they express so perfectly the passion for basketball which was his.