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## Autobiography of RON SHARPTON

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Written by RS (c. 2003)

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Sixty-six years of modeling will be hard to put on a few pages. I am sure that I will leave out a lot.

I have been modeling from the age of two, as my Uncle was a modeler and had me flying HL6 and RO6 rubber models in 1936. He helped me until he went into the Navy in 1940. I was then lucky to meet Mr. W. T. Thomas who was the president of the Daytona Beach Model Airplane Club. By the way, Mr. Thomas was the designer and builder of the World War I Thomas Movies *Scout*. Mr. Thomas started taking me to contests in Florida and Georgia from 1942 through 1950. During this time, he flew Free Flight and U-control. I was very lucky to have him as a friend.

My first AMA number was 1454, from about 1943 up until I became a life member. Thomas took me to the 1947 Nats and the first Plymouth Internationals, all the way from Daytona Beach, Florida to Detroit and then on to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

At the age of 12, I was at a high point competition at the 1946 Georgia State Free Flight Championships. They decided on Saturday night that you had to be from the state of Georgia to win the high point because they knew no one could beat my score. Mr. Thomas protested to the AMA, but nothing ever came of it. At that age, I could not see what the big deal was. My good friend, George Perryman, was awarded high point. George said that when he met me I was just a snot-nosed kid. The only difference now is that I am older.

I flew through the 1950s and 1960s and won many high point contests during that time. In the late 1960s, I became involved with the Florida Modeler Association (FMA.) I have held all the office positions in the FMA. I have served as president most of that time and am still president currently.

I was one of the main pushers to take on the task of clearing the Palm Bay flying site. It has taken thousands of hours of donated labor and time by so many that I cannot begin to list all the names. I usually pull the sanction for about 10 to 12 contests a year at Palm Bay. We have about 20 Free Flight contest sanctions a year. I have been the Southeastern Nostalgia representative from the start of Nostalgia in the early 1980s. I have been on their "Modelers of the Year" list many times. I am now a District V Contest Board member, a Society of Antique Modelers (SAM) Hall of Fame member and am on the SAM Hall of Fame nominating committee. I have won the Power Nostalgia National Cup High Point from 2000 through 2002. I also won the KOI High Point for five different years. I was the Nostalgia Power Grand Champion at the 2002 Nats. I have served as a contest director for SAM, the AMA, and worked with the FAI team finals at Palm Bay in 1994, 1998, and 2002. I am a life member of SAM, the

National Free Flight Society (NFFS,) AMA (#L541), and the Model Engine Collectors Association (MECA.)

In closing, I must say if it were not for money Tom McLaughlan left to the FMA, the Palm Bay flying site would not exist as a Free Flight flying field. I believe we have more Free Flight contests a year than any other site in the United States. To you, Tom, all us modelers would like to say thanks. Although I do not have money to leave to modeling when I go, I want to do all I can to promote modeling while I am here. Best to all.

-Ron Sharpton, District V Contest Board Member