
Biography of ROBERT E. VOJSLAVEK

1937 to October 21, 2000

AMA Number: 760

Transcribed & Edited by SS (9/02)

Career:

- Worked for the AMA for 12 years serving in positions such as administrative coordinator and director of operations; volunteered at the AMA for years
- Coordinated the Control Line portion of the AMA Nationals for several years
- Wrote the first computer program used to compile Nationals scoring
- Very involved with helping the AMA move from Reston, Virginia, to Muncie, Indiana
- Heavily involved in the early development of the International Aeromodeling Center
- Owned his own business, REV Model Products, for a time
- A founding member of the Woodland Aero Modelers Club in Chicago; served as treasurer and later as president
- Involved with planning and organizing the AMA's Grand Event shortly before his death
- Worked to bring Radio Controlled (RC) car activity to the International Aeromodeling Center; directed the first AMA-sanctioned RC car race
- AMA named its car racetrack the Bob Vojslavek RC Raceway

Honors:

- 1972 – AMA Distinguished Service Award
- 1998 – AMA Fellow

The following article ran in the February 2001 issue of Model Aviation magazine following Robert Vojslavek's death.

To some, he was a valued and trusted co-worker. To others, he was a hard-working volunteer. But for nearly all those who came to know Robert E. "Bob" Vojslavek, he was a friend. Vojslavek, 63, passed away October 21, 2000 in St. Vincent Hospital, Indianapolis.

Vojslavek was hired by the AMA in March 1981 as administrative coordinator. He worked for the Academy for 12 years, serving as director of operations from 1990 to 1993.

He retired from the Academy in 1993 after receiving a heart transplant. Despite health problems in recent years, Vojslavek never permitted them to get in the way of his enthusiasm for modeling projects and volunteer work.

"Bob Vojslavek was one of those unique people who couldn't seem to get quite enough out of life in the short time he was with us," noted one of his former co-workers, Greg Chartrand. "I remember him as a boss who was strict but fair, all business but very personable, demanding yet forgiving and always willing to pass out credit, even if it wasn't always deserved."

"When I first met Bob in the 1970s he was a volunteer for the organization; he later became a co-worker then a boss and once again a volunteer, all through this a great friend," said Joyce Hager, AMA executive director. "Bob was a wealth of knowledge and was always willing to help. A great void will be felt and I will miss him."

Among his many accomplishments while working as a volunteer and as a staff person for the Academy, Vojslavek coordinated the Control Line portion of the AMA Nationals for several years and later wrote the first computer program used to compile Nationals scoring.

He was heavily involved in moving the Academy's museum and headquarters from Reston, Virginia, to Muncie, Indiana, in the early 1990s and in the early development of the International Aeromodeling Center.

Prior to working for the Academy, Vojslavek served for several years in the U.S. Navy, drove tractor-trailers and owned his own business, REV Model Products.

As a modeler, Vojslavek was also an active club member. He was one of the founding members of the Woodland Aero Modelers in Chicago, Illinois, and served as the club's treasurer and later president.

"He mentored and helped many new pilots learn to fly not only Control Line and Radio Control, but he had the patience of a saint and taught many of the younger pilots to fly and some of the old timers also," recalled Phil Binter, fellow club member and friend. "He was an asset to the club, even after he left the area for the AMA in Reston and lately in Muncie, where he helped the club in any way he could."

"There's very little that Bob came into contact with in which he didn't leave a mark," noted longtime friend Ralph Warner, president of the Radio Control Hobby Trade Association (RCHTA) and owner of Radio Controlled Models, Inc. (RAM). Warner recalled that they first got to know each other in the 1950s.

Warner said Vojslavek's exceptionally strong organizational and leadership skills meant that nearly every project he was involved with was successful, the Grand Event being one recent example.

In later years, Vojslavek was able to draw upon his experience from three levels – consumer, industry and association – to drive his success as an AMA volunteer, Warner said, adding, "He was the consummate volunteer."

In recognition of his hard work to bring organized Radio Control car activity to the International Aeromodeling Center, the racetrack on the site has been designated the Bob Vojslavek RC Raceway. The RC car track held its first AMA-sanctioned race on October 15, 2000 with Vojslavek as the contest director.

The following piece ran with the above article in Model Aviation's February 2001 issue.

Members Always Came First

By Rob Kurek, Director of Publications

Bob Vojslavek was far more than my first boss at the Academy. He was my mentor and even more importantly, a very special person.

My one regret is that I only had the opportunity to work closely with him for one year, the year leading up to the Academy's move to Muncie in 1993.

It was a very hectic time for all of us as we prepared to move an organization of 50-plus people, yet Bob always found time for me when I needed advice or help trying to solve a problem.

I learned so much from Bob that year, and it still serves as the foundation for virtually everything I do as an employee of the Academy today.

I think back to a day not long after I had been hired, sitting in his office about a half hour after the office had closed for the day. What we were discussing I don't recall, but I remember his phone ringing and Bob taking the call. It was from a member upset about something, the subject now long forgotten.

What I do remember is that whatever the subject was, Bob didn't take a message or tell the member to contact the Membership Department the next day.

He talked to the member for at least 20 minutes, and by the time he was through, the member was no longer contemplating trashing his membership come renewal time.

I clearly remember thinking, "That's what this is about. This is the essence of working for a membership organization."

Having never worked for an association, this episode brought everything into focus and helped me recognize what is truly important and that is never lose sight of why we are here – to serve the membership.

I will miss Bob greatly. I will miss our lengthy conversations (yes, he did most the talking), his insight, his leadership, his wit, but most importantly, his friendship.

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