



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of RICHARD BERG BLACK

December 2, 1934 - February 11, 1967



Transcribed & Edited by SS (11/2002), Reformatted by JS (06/2009)

Career:

- Took numerous photos at model airplane meets that he later turned into slides
- Had a small hobby shop in Independence, Missouri; received a hobby dealer award for outstanding contribution to model aviation in 1961 from the Kansas City Model Association
- A founder of the Kansas City Propbuters club; initiated the club's newsletter called the Slip Stream
- 1962: Wrote the Free Flight column for Model Airplane News magazine starting
- 1963: Joined the Ann Arbor (Michigan) Airfoilers when he moved there and was elected president of the club
- March 1964: Started writing Club Notes for Model Aviation magazine
- 1965: Elected vice president of AMA District VII
- 1966: Wrote a history of the AMA from 1942 to 1966, the year he completed it
- Helped start the National Free Flight Society through correspondence of ideas with other Free Flyers
- 1966-1967: Served as vice president of District IX when he moved to Denver, Colorado; remained in that position until his death only a few months later

Honors:

- 1966: AMA Distinguished Service Award
- 1979: National Free Flight Society Hall of Fame

The following biography about Richard Berg Black is taken from "The History of the AMA" by Willis C. Brown.

Richard Berg Black was born on December 2, 1934 in Lincoln, Nebraska. At the age of two, he became afflicted with polio, a disease that left him handicapped the rest of his life. Because of that affliction, he was unable to attend school as other children, but secured his education through tutors in his home. In 1948, he moved to Independence, Missouri, where he enrolled in the American School (correspondence) of Chicago, Illinois, and received his high school diploma in 1954. He took other correspondence courses in writing, but was, for the most part, self-educated.

Dick had many hobbies besides modeling. His first love was books and over the years, he accumulated a large collection of science fiction, mysteries, classics, his favorite novels, historical selections, and technical reference books on aeronautics. He also collected stamps, coins, and loved music and had a large repertoire of records both modern and classical.

Photography was another thing he enjoyed and had quite an assortment of slides of model airplanes taken at different meets as well as slides and photographs of different things he had seen over the country. He loved to travel, so his parents took him every place they went, which included many interesting places in the United States and Canada. He also had tropical fish, which he kept in his office as he said, "to quiet his thinking while solving knotty problems with which he dealt in his correspondence and writings."

Dick had a small hobby shop in Independence, Missouri, and this is where he got acquainted with modelers. He received a hobby dealer award for outstanding contribution to model aviation in 1961 from the KCMA (Kansas City Model Association). He was one of the founders of the Propbuster Club there. It was as a member of this club that started him on his career as a writer. He initiated the club newsletter, which he called Slip Stream. He enjoyed writing the editorials.

In 1962, he moved to Omaha, Nebraska, and had to give up his hobby shop, but was asked to write the Free Flight column for Model Airplane News magazine. This was quite a new experience, but he soon got into the swing of things and really enjoyed writing VTO.

In 1963, he moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan. He made new friends by joining the Ann Arbor Airfoilers. This same year he was elected president of the club and devoted a great deal of his time reorganizing the club with special emphasis on getting junior members.

It was also while in Ann Arbor in March 1964 that he was asked to write Club Notes for Model Aviation magazine. In 1965, he was elected vice president of AMA District VII.

This same year Dick was asked to write the AMA history from 1942 through 1966. This proved to be a much bigger job than he anticipated, but he got busy with his research and gathering of necessary information and, finally, finished his copy in September 1966. For this effort, he was presented a Distinguished Service Award by AMA, an honor he was very proud to receive.

Dick always had in mind a need for National Free Flight Society, and after much correspondence, which took place between him and interested Free Flighters, the idea finally became a reality.

In 1965, Dick attended the Nationals at Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, and Glenview, Illinois in 1966. He wrote up the Free Flight portion of these Nationals for Model Airplane News magazine. Here he met many modelers and officials of AMA that he had corresponded with over the years.

In November 1966, he moved to Denver, Colorado. The only thing he didn't like about making this move was losing the vice presidency of District VII. However, after being in Denver just a short time, he was asked to be the vice president of District IX. He was very happy over this appointment and met with several local clubs before his death on February 11, 1967.

Dick had many friends all over the country who he corresponded with frequently and many who he had the opportunity to meet personally. Dick enjoyed his work as a writer and fellow modeler, and though unable to fly his own planes enjoyed building them. He was enthusiastic and

thoroughly loved people, especially his work with the younger modelers. Dick Black will long be remembered for his devotion to his work and his contributions to the model aviation field.

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