



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of A. F. "JUNE" PIERCE



Written by AMA staff (10/1949); Transcribed & Reformatted by JS (04/2011)

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"JUNE" PIERCE FATHER OF MIDSMAA

A.F. "June" Pierce, of St. Joseph, Missouri, is the originator of the whole idea of regional model airplane organizations. It was June who started the Mid-States Model Aeronautical Association [MIDSMAA], the first of such organizations in the country.



After acting as Contest Director for almost all of the major meets in the area for a number of years, June realized the need for coordinated planning of meets to keep pace with the increasing activity. June says he still yearns for the good old days when it was hard to promote more than one contest a month.

His first efforts at unification were to set up regional trophies to be awarded to the flyers who won the most points in all the meets that summer. These trophies were sponsored by the Mo-Kan-Ark District of Kiwanis International. June is the district chairman of their Boys and Girls Work Committee. Because there were no means of gathering information the tabulation of points was very difficult. It was further complicated by the lack of uniformity in contest procedure and a lack of advance contest publicity.

To correct these inadequacies, June called a meeting of contest sponsors in Kansas City on January 6, 1946. This group organized to form the MidSMAA, electing June their first president. They established a coordinated calendar of AMA contests for the coming season and made up a master mailing list for publicity.

Out of the idea of the Mid-States grew the AMA system of regional coordinators. June was appointed Midwest Coordinator.

It was through the interest of his son Jim that June got his start in model airplanes. While Jim was in the hospital recovering from pneumonia, he and his father worked on one of the original Jimmy Allen planes that at that time were being promoted by the Skelly Oil Company. June's interest has developed through all the phases of model building until at present he is primarily interested in radio control. He is one of the original boosters of this type of airplane in this area. His system of judging radio control, which he developed for the 1946 Nationals, has become the standard procedure. He has been chosen as Contest Director of this event in this year's Nationals.

June's contributions to the hobby are along organizational lines. He is one of those men who spend all of their time making it possible for others to build and fly. He has always responded to the need for leadership and has been instrumental in the formation of many model airplane clubs. His Hell Cats in St. Joseph were the first Air Scout Squadron west of the Mississippi. They are still an active club, trailer and all, having had over fifty members since their organization.

The interest of the modeler has always been June's chief concern. An interesting example of this was his Mail Order Contest at Alma, Kansas in 1944, probably the only one ever conducted. The contest was rained out before any flying had taken place. Rather than see the contestants go home disappointed, June authorized them to fly in their home cities under supervision and send the results back to him. The prizes were then mailed out to the winners.

June has been quite concerned about the trend toward big prizes. He feels that the flyers are being encouraged to compete for the value of the prizes and are missing a great deal of the sport of flying. However, he has always insisted that prize values be advertised accurately, because exaggerations are unfair to the contestant. This attitude of fairness is reciprocal. June demands and gets good sportsmanship and cooperation from his contestants.

To make a contestant behave and like it takes a broad sense of humor. June's is well known. It was he who gave C. O. Wright his red fireman's suspenders, and it was he who lit up this year's MidSMAA meeting with the gift of an illuminated bow tie to Al Lewis, His own nickname has a humorous ring, but June says it is a contraction of Junior. OK, June-yur!

The following two notices were published in the October 1, 1949 issue of Model Aviation magazine.

A. F. "June" Pierce

To model builders throughout the country, the passing of June Pierce of St. Joseph, MO. Brought a deep sense of personal loss. For many years, June worked tirelessly for the advancement of model aviation both in his own locality and on a national scale by serving in various official posts in the Academy of Model Aeronautics.

June was stricken unexpectedly at the Nationals in Olathe where he had reported to serve, for the second year, as director of the radio control event. He was taken to a Kansas City hospital where he was reported, the following day, to be doing very nicely. During the next night, however, he passed away in his sleep.

June was a champion of the youngsters in model aviation and continually fought to make contests more attractive to the inexperienced flyers. The tremendous good he accomplished for model clubs in his area will continue to bring beneficial results for years to come. He believed, above all, in fair play and good sportsmanship and, as an example of the high principles he exemplified, was an outstanding citizen of his community, a devout member of his church and was truly loved by all who knew him. Surely, model aviation has lost one of its truest friends and greatest

champions and our most sincere and heart-felt feelings of sympathy go out to his wife and family in their sorrow.

June Pierce Memorial Trophy Fund Initiated

During the AMA Executive Council meeting at Olathe, which was held following the death of June Pierce, it was voted that the Academy should create a “June Pierce Memorial Trophy” to be presented annually at the Nationals. It was the unanimous feeling by all present that inasmuch as June worked so untiringly to advance good sportsmanship and fair play in model aviation, the award should be made each year to the Nationals contestant who demonstrates the greatest amount of sportsmanship during the contest.

To start the ball rolling, a collection was taken among the radio control flyers at Olathe. All responded generously, but it was felt that a great many of June’s friends and admirers in addition, would like to pay tribute to him by participating in the creation of this award. For this reason, all who wish are invited to take part. Contributions of any size are welcome and should be mailed to AMA Headquarters. Simply mark your contribution, “June Pierce Memorial Trophy Fund.”

The initial presentation of this award will take place at the 1950 Nationals.

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