



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of TOM MCLAUGHLAN

November 11, 1914 - November 24, 1992

Started modeling in 1923 AMA # 5580



Written & Submitted by BJ; Transcribed & Edited by SS (01/2003), Reformatted by JS (10/2009)

Career:

- Won a trip to the Nationals as a young man
- Served as an AMA contest director and was a contest coordinator for AMA District V
- Competed in FAI power and was on the FAI team twice
- Competed in every form of AMA outdoor events
- Donated large sums of money to various modeling-related organizations upon his death

Honors:

- 1977: AMA Distinguished Service Award
- 1991: AMA Fellow
- 1994: Society of Antique Modelers Hall of Fame
- 2002: National Free Flight Society Hall of Fame

The following biography of Tom McLaughlan was written and submitted by Robert W. Junk who also completed Tom's Hall of Fame application in 1995.

Tom spent his working life in the aircraft industry starting with North American in 1931. He left North American in 1934 to work for Sikorski Aircraft and then left there in 1940 to work for the Naval Rework Facility in Pensacola, Florida. In 1971 he retired as superintendent number one.

Tom began to build model aircraft at age nine. One of his school teachers taught a class in model design and building. Tom won a trip to the Nationals, but which Nationals is in question. It was possible the second Nationals at Detroit. He rode the train from Baltimore, Maryland, with his twin pusher in a shoebox. Tom said he would have done better if he had not installed the wing backward.

Tom was a contest director, contest coordinator for AMA District V and an AMA fellow. He competed in FAI power and was an FAI team member twice.

Tom was most likely remembered for his folding propeller, but was among the first to utilize variable incidence tail and auto rudder on his FAI planes. At one time, he ran geared engines; he made the gear boxes himself.

Tom was the contest director of the first of five flags Southeastern Championships for 37 years. He was a member of the Society of Antique Modelers' (SAM) Hall of Fame and competed in every form of outdoor AMA events as well as flew SAM's power.

At Toms death he willed the AMA \$10,000, the National Model Aviation Museum \$50,000, the National Free Flight Society \$50,000, the Florida Modelers Association \$50,000, SAM \$50,000

and the Pensacola Free Flight Society \$20,000. During his lifetime, he donated to the AMA museum and to various other AMA efforts. Tom was quiet about his donations.

(signed) Robert W. Junk

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