



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of REGGIE SHOWERS



Written by JS (08/2013); Added to HP files by JS (03/2016)

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## **I Am the AMA**

### **Reggie Showers, Motorcycle drag racing world champion and youth mentor**

*JS: How did you get involved with model aviation?*

RS: My interest in model aviation started in the early 1970s, with my brother teaching me to fly balsa gliders.

He was a helicopter door gunner during the Vietnam War, and when he came home on leave we would build and fly gliders that my father sold in the grocery store.

At the age of 10, I got my first RC airplane: a Cox .049 foam trainer! I worked for weeks to save \$70 for the complete RTF kit from the Spiegel catalog! My first flight ended in a tree, but it didn't discourage me from continuing to learn.

*JS: How has model aviation impacted your life and/or career?*

RS: Currently I am the instructor for the Urban Youth Stem Academy's Remote Piloted Vehicle program. It's a nonprofit organization in Philadelphia that teaches science-, technology-, engineering-, and math- [STEM] based programs to inner city kids.

Without the support of the U.S. Navy and companies like Horizon Hobby and BVM Jets [Bob Violett Models], both of which I am a team member, these kids would never know about the incredible joy and future opportunities of flying model aircraft. It's a collaborative effort and it's all about educating our youth!

*JS: What disciplines of modeling do you currently participate in?*

RS: Since my first RC flight in 1975, I've experimented with different types of disciplines such as trainers, sport, pattern, and helis, but truly my heart belongs to the jets! Coming from a high-performance motorcycle background, it's easy for me to identify with the speed and complexity of turbine jets.

My first was a BVM Aggressor that I purchased from the late Eric Baugher. It was a beautiful jet, which I unfortunately crashed into a cornfield on its maiden flight, never to be found!

I learned a valuable lesson: RC aircraft are not toys and should be treated with a certain level of safety and respect.

I'm partial to Bob Violett Models products. I currently fly a BVM KingCat. I also have an F-16 and two Vipers, all three of which are ducted fan.

*JS: What are your other hobbies?*

RS: Besides flying RC, I love to snowboard! I got talked into trying snowboarding by a friend in 2007, and I've been hooked ever since – so much so that I got certified to teach in 2011.

I routinely travel to Colorado and teach disabled people as well as wounded veterans the joys of riding a snowboard. As a bilateral below-knee amputee, I am a perfect example of what human beings are capable of when they put their minds to something.

I also spend time with my 14-year-old daughter, Autumn, and mentoring other kids. I work with different nonprofit groups and teach our nation's youth about the importance of a good education and believing in yourself despite life's adversities.

*JS: Who or what has influenced you most?*

RS: I'm very proud to say that my father, God rest his soul, taught me to be the man that I am today. His incredibly positive, optimistic, and supportive attitude taught me that I could be whatever I wanted to be in life, and his selfless actions taught me to be a man of service to others. He was a good man! I am forever in his debt for his influence in my life!

*JS: How did you get started in drag racing?*

RS: I was just an avid motorcycle rider back in 1983 when I got talked into my very first drag race by some friends, and I won! The feeling of that victory was so overwhelming – especially given the fact that I was an amputee – that I had to pursue a career in motorcycle drag-racing.

In the early 1990s, I took some time off from racing to pursue my dream of full-scale flying. I got my multiengine rating, bought a Cessna 310, and flew privately until I got a sponsorship to race in the National Hot Rod Association's Pro Stock Motorcycle class.

In 2003, my last full year of competition, we won three races and finished fourth.

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