



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of DON COLENUTT

December 19, 1939 - June 3, 2002 Modeler since 1978



Transcribed and Edited by SS (7/2002), Reformatted by JS (06/2009)

The following was published in the newsletter of the Oklahoma TRAMPS following the death of Don in June 2002. Dwain Chapman wrote it.

Don Colenutt got started in the Radio Controlled (RC) hobby in 1978. Don, Rick McAddoo, and I would sometimes spend all day Saturday and all day Sunday at the flying field – that is assuming we didn't re-kit any airplanes. Don loved a good-looking plane, but his real passion was the flying part of the hobby and he quickly became one of the best flyers in the area. He was president of the local club called the Muskogee Wing Dingers and was a great ambassador of the hobby for a couple of years.

As life has a way of doing, we became distracted with the business of being grown-ups, and that coupled with the loss of our flying field, caused us to hang up our radios for a few years. When Don found out about his illness, he began to talk to me about getting back into the hobby. We had heard that a local club called TRAMPS was going to be at the mall displaying some models and promoting the hobby. By this time, Don had lost a lot of weight and needed help getting around, but he wanted to go so badly that I agreed to take him. That's all it took.

Next thing I know, he's writing a check, and we left the mall with three airplanes, two motors and two radios.

In the next few weeks, the hobby filled his life with purpose and enjoyment, just like it had all those years ago. Even when his health only allowed him to sit up a couple of hours a day, he would spend most of that time trying to complete an Ultimate Biplane. He didn't get to finish that plane, but we will. The last time he flew, we had to sit a chair on the runway because he was too weak to stand, but the excitement was still there.

There's no way to express what it meant to Don for Rick and the local club to accept and help him, even though most of the members never knew him. His family and I want to express our gratitude and will be quick to tell anybody about the heart and compassion of this club of modelers called TRAMPS.

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