



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of DEWEY BROBERG, JR.

Started modeling in the 1950s



Written by Model Aviation staff (12/2010) and MH (02/2015); Reformatted by JS (12/2010); Updated by JS (02/2015, 04/2015)

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*The following was published in the January 2011 issue of Model Aviation magazine. Dewey was inducted into the 2010 Model Aviation Hall of Fame.*

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Dewey Broberg is the man behind Du-Bro Products. After 50 years in business, he is recognized as one of aeromodeling's leading innovators.

Born in New York, Dewey and his family moved to Chicago when he was a youngster. He began modeling at age six when the Chicago area was a hotbed of Control Line activities and he was active in local clubs.

In the 1950s, glow engines were started with lantern batteries attached to the engine with two alligator clips. Dewey modified a common plastic clothespin to simplify the connection. The first Du-Bro product, the Kwik Klip, was born. This was followed by a smaller, stamped metal version for 1/2A engines.

Early Radio Control fliers were adapting Control Line wheels for their models with limited success. Dewey introduced a line of lightweight, nylon-hubbed wheels, followed by a nose wheel brake and steerable nose wheel hardware. An expanded and upgraded line of these products is still available through Du-Bro. The introduction of purpose-designed hinges and fuel tanks helped accelerate the growth of Radio Control and led to in-house modeling and stamping.

Interested in all facets of models, Dewey saw the increase in popularity of slot cars and added vacuum-formed scale bodies to his line of products. These are sought after by collectors today.

Du-Bro's expanding line needed more operating space and the company moved to Niles, Illinois, in 1959. It moved again in 1967 to a 20,000-square-foot building in Wauconda, Illinois. This building was expanded to 40,000 square feet in 1982 to keep production in-house and maintain high quality standards.

In the 1960s, Dewey introduced a series of ARFs, the production of which benefited from his vacuum-formed slot cars. The models included a high-wing trainer, a scale Piper *Cherokee*, and a flying boat named *Sea Bird*. The addition of these simplified the entry of new modelers into the hobby.

Du-Bro produced the first Radio Control helicopter kit in the United States after hiring David Gray in 1972. Known as the *Whirley Bird*, the aircraft is represented in the National Model Aviation Museum in Muncie, Indiana and in the Smithsonian.

The *Whirley Bird* was soon followed by a larger *Hughes 300*, a 60-powered *Shark*, and a smaller *Tri Star*. Special fittings and hardware such as ball links and an adaptable muffler required by the new product line were added to Du-bro's hardware line.

Dewey applied his innovative skills to other areas as well. He has an expanded line of fishing accessories, the Pro Series, he started in 1982. Pine Ridge archery products began in 1997. Other products, including a golf club washer and birdhouses, were either adapted or developed for other uses including robotics, missiles, and even Jim Henson's Muppets.

Dewey was a driving force behind the retailers and manufacturers that formed the Radio Control Hobby Trade Association (RCHTA) in the early 1980s and the trade show now known as iHobby Expo, held annually in Chicago.

Although his children are now responsible for the day-to-day management of Du-Bro, Dewey remains involved, offering new ideas and solutions to problems, emphasizing leading-edge development and quality products.

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*The following was published online on the AMA Foundation website in Spring 2015.*

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## **AMA Foundation Establishes Dewey O. Broberg Jr. Memorial Scholarship in honor of the late Dewey "Orv" Broberg Jr.**

By Marisa Hempfling

The Academy of Model Aeronautics Foundation would like to thank the family of Dewey Orville Broberg Jr. for creating the Dewey O. Broberg Jr. Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship will be available in 2016 for high school seniors. To be eligible for the scholarship, the graduating senior must be pursuing a career in engineering, mechanics, or a similar field.

Dewey Broberg Jr. is the inventive genius and founder behind Du-Bro Products. He played an instrumental role in designing and developing many products that aeromodelers still use today. Dewey is also remembered as being one of the founders of the Radio Control Hobby Trade Association (RCHTA) in the early 1980s and the annual trade show, now known as iHobby Expo, they host annually in Chicago.

Dewey began modeling at the young age of six and his passion for the hobby has grown throughout his life. He invented the first Du-Bro product in the 1950s when glow engines were started with lantern batteries attached to the engine with two alligator clips. Dewey modified a plastic clothespin to simplify the connection and the first Du-Bro product, the Kwik Klip, was born.

Dewey created a line of lightweight, nylon-hubbed wheels, followed by a nose wheel brake and steerable nose wheel hardware for early RC fliers. An expanded and upgraded line of these products are still available through Du-Bro.

Du-Bro's continued to expand their company thanks to Dewey's inventive mind. Due to the expansion, the company moved to Niles, IL in 1959. The company moved again in 1967 to Wauconda, IL, where they are still located today.

Du-Bro produced the first Radio Control helicopter kit in the United States, known as the Whirley Bird. The aircraft is on display at the National Model Aviation Museum and at the Smithsonian. The Whirley Bird was followed by a larger Hughes 300, a 60-powered Shark, and a smaller Tri Star.

Dewey applied his innovative skills to other areas as well, such as fishing accessories, archery products, bird houses, and more.

Sadly, Dewey "Orv" Broberg passed away on January 12, 2015. He will be dearly missed by the aviation community, but his legend will live on through the Dewey O. Broberg Memorial Scholarship.

To learn more about Dewey "Orv" Broberg, visit the AMA History Project website.

Contributions to the Dewey O. Broberg Memorial Scholarship should be made to the AMA Foundation, 5161 E. Memorial Drive, Muncie, IN 47302.

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