



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of ROBERT L. (BOB) BROWN

AMA #100



Written by AMA staff (01/2007, 02/2012, 02/2017)); Formatted by JS (6/2007, 02/2012)

The following biography is from the January 2007 issue of Model Aviation magazine, pages 186-187.

“Bob Brown’s long service as District III Vice President of the Academy of Model Aeronautics and his chairmanship of the Academy’s Publications Committee are notable contributions that alone suffice to qualify him as an eminently suitable candidate for the Hall of Fame,” wrote Maynard Hill. “His hard work on behalf of the Academy on the Federation Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) Pylon Racing competitions also distinguishes him as a modeler who is a cut well above average.”

Bob Brown has been District III Vice President since 1986, servicing seven consecutive three-year terms. As Flying Site chairperson from 1985-1988, he was instrumental in helping acquire the current AMA Headquarters and National Flying Site. As chairperson of the Property Acquisition and Development Committee (PADCOM) from 1990 through 2005, he led the effort to obtain and develop property adjacent to the flying site.

Bob was appointed co-chair of the AMA Publications Committee in 1995 and assumed full chair in 2000, has chaired the International Aeromodeling Center (IAC) Site Committee since 2000, and chaired the IAC Maintenance Committee since 2005.

Involved in RC Pylon Racing almost since its inception, Bob was part of the deBolt-Brown team that held several world Pylon and Speed records from 1972 through 1982. He and fellow Model Aviation Hall of Fame member Hal deBolt competed in the 1974 Aero Olympic placing eighth before the FAI officially recognized Pylon Racing as an organized world competition.

He chaired the RC Pylon (F3D) Team Selection Committee from 1979 until 1994 and developed the selection process that is still in use today. He served as Pylon pit boss at the Nats from 1982 through 1995, supervising flight line operations.

On the international level, Bob has chaired the FAI F3D Subcommittee since 1982 and was selected as the F3D World Championships Jury Chairman 10 times since 1985. Currently a member of the FAI Executive Committee, he was appointed to that position in 1992. Bob helped organize the four F3D World Championships that have been held in the United States.

Bob has been a CD for 26 years and was primarily responsible for developing the format for a non-competition rally-type event for his club, the Southern Tier Aero Radio Society (STARS), which has become a fun-fly standard. Assisting Wayne Yeager in the RC portion of the Nats, Bob has served in various capacities for roughly 15 years.

The STARS has recognized Bob as a lead person in the club’s efforts to acquire land for use as a flying site in 1972 and again in 1985. In 1989, he was instrumental in the movement to procure flying sites in public parks in Pennsylvania.

Bob is a retired technology teacher and exposed thousands of students to RC building and flying in his 40-year career. He is an acknowledged expert on model aircraft finishing techniques and lectured on the topic at a number of symposiums in the Northeast. He was among the first to design and build a ¼-scale aircraft in the 1970s.

Bob's building articles have appeared in several publications, including *Flying Models* and *American Aircraft Modeler*. As the District III Vice President, he has been responsible for a monthly column in *MA* since 1986.

Bob's contributions to aeromodeling are many and span his adult life. He is widely considered a significant AMA representative.

The following interview was published in the In the Air section of Model Aviation magazine in the February 2012 issue (page 10). Bob Brown was elected AMA President at the end of 2011.

Meet AMA President Bob Brown

Bradford, Pennsylvania resident Bob Brown, 66, has been elected to a two-year term as president of the AMA. He and his wife, JoAnne, have two daughters and four grandchildren.

He visited AMA Headquarters shortly after the election ended, and sat down for an interview with MA staff.

MA: *How old were you when you became involved in aeromodeling? What was the first thing you flew? Also, what sparked your interest in aviation?*

BB: I'm 66 years old; I've been involved in model aviation probably 60 years. The first plane I ever flew was a Free Flight model.

The original Piper Cub was made in Bradford, Pennsylvania. It was over the hill from my house; roughly 3 miles. The factory burned down in 1936 so it was well gone when I was born. But the residue from it, the fact that I could sit in my backyard and all of these Piper Cubs were constantly flying over my home... it really lit my fire.

MA: *What do you like to fly?*

BB: In all honesty, I like to consider myself a modeler. What do I like to fly? Whatever whim I have. I've been around the circuit for quite a few years and I can usually do very well at whatever I want to do. I can try to fly [just about anything].

MA: *Do you have any other hobbies?*

BB: I have an extensive garden railroad in my backyard. Not only do I have electric power, I have steam power also. The garden railroad, it allows me to express my modeling interest in another facet.

I haven't played with [RC] boats in years, although I have a very close friend whose building one now. I won't say that I won't be building one.

You'll also find automobile racing is a real big bag for me; primarily dirt. I don't like to say that I'm refined. Even though I'm 66, I still love to play and I [am] into drag racing. I was into go-karts. I could easily be into Sprint Cars.

MA: How many years did you serve in District III and in what capacities?

BB: Let's say I've served the Academy for over 30 years. I started out with the FAI program, was the subcommittee chairman with that, and became involved within the hierarchy the infrastructure of the Academy. I was a VP [district vice president] for 21 years. Some people say I was a VP for too long. But I must have been doing something right if I was reelected that many times.

MA: Why did you run for AMA president?

BB: To make the Academy bigger and better.

I'm not here as president, I'm here as the team leader. The team is composed of the Council, the employees, and the membership. I don't want to be known as "Bob the President." I want us to focus as a team, work as a team, and be as productive as we possibly can for the benefit of the Academy.

My campaign statement started out with the word "fun" in the first sentence. It concluded with the word "fun" in the last sentence. Modeling is fun. When the fun stops, the enjoyment is absent. We're in this for fun.

MA: How can we get the new generation interested in aeromodeling?

BB: We have that new generation out there. All we have to do is recognize them in a fair manner.

I lead by example. As a [shop] teacher, I reached thousands of kids. I could say yes, some of my kids are now full-scale pilots. I take great pride in the philosophy that if you believe in someone, they'll believe in you. That means a lot to me.

MA: At the end of your term, what would you like to look back and see as your accomplishments?

BB: The main thing right now is a satisfied membership in relation to the FAA. That's number one. Number two would be an increased membership in the Academy. Number three would be a feeling by each Academy member that the Academy is of value to them.

MA: You mentioned FAA being the number one concern. How do you feel about the problem and what might need to be done?

BB: The problem with the FAA is probably the most challenging problem that we have ever encountered. It could ruin model aviation as we know it today by limiting our enjoyment of the hobby.

MA: Other than the FAA issue, what is the biggest challenge you think the AMA might face?

BB: Decreasing membership.

MA: *As president, what are you most looking forward to?*

BB: I want to see people having fun.

The following was published in the In the Air section of Model Aviation magazine in the February 2017 issue (page 14).

Couple Honored

AMA's outgoing president, Bob Brown and his wife, JoAnne, were honored in November for their many years of service to the organization.

Following a meeting with FAI officials at AMA Headquarters in November 2016, Bob and JoAnne were presented the AMA Outstanding Service Award for Couples. This award is given in recognition and appreciation of two individuals who, as a team, have given of themselves to the AMA in a consistent, selfless, and untiring manner for many years, providing an unmatched example of volunteerism to all.

Bob served two terms as AMA president, beginning in January 2013. Before that, he served AMA in various capacities for more than 30 years. He was an FAI subcommittee chairman and was AMA District III vice president for 21 years.

JoAnne took minutes at AMA Executive Council meetings for several years, attended and helped at AMA trade shows and events for roughly 20 years, and was previously an AMA employee.

The FAI also presented Bob with the FAI Paul Tissandier Diploma on Friday, November 11, during a reception. This award is given to those who have served the cause of aviation in general, specifically sporting aviation, through their work, initiative, devotion, or in other ways.

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