



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of DR. JAMES M. EDWARDS

Born July 10, 1927      Started modeling in 1933

AMA #L24



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## Career:

- Starting building model kits at age six
- Was a school teacher, principal and then a dentist
- Won the 1969 Radio Control Pattern Masters
- Placed second in Radio Control pattern to Jim Kirkland at the 1970 Nationals (Nats)
- Team manager for the Radio Control team at Doylestown, Pennsylvania, in 1971 and chief judge at Las Vegas, Nevada
- Chief pattern judge at the 1976 Nats
- Chief judge at the South Africa World Championships in 1976
- Served as a U.S. judge at the 1977 World Championships

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*The following is an article that was written about Dr. Jim Edwards and published in the September 1979 issue of Model Aviation magazine.*

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## Profile of a Life Member: Dr. Jim Edwards, L24

By Jim McNeill, AMA Historian

Internationally recognized for his Radio Control Pattern flying, nationally heralded for his team manager and judging contributions, known everywhere as a gentleman and a gracious sportsman; seldom has the Academy of Model Aeronautics bestowed a Life Membership on a flyer with a more spectacular flying career than upon Dr. Jim Edwards of New Albany, Mississippi.

I walked out on the flight line last summer at the Lake Charles Nationals (Nats) and asked one of the chief Radio Control pattern judges if he could pose for a picture for a second or two. "Sure, why not?" came the instant reply. So, under the wicked August afternoon sun, and with the big eight-pound pattern ships whining by, I snapped this shot of "Doc" Edwards for you [*referring to the photograph that ran with the article*].

How did Jim acquire an unparalleled expertise and an entourage of admiring friends around the world? He started young for one thing – at age six he was pasting together Paul Gillow and Joe Ott five-cent solid balsa kits, those little solid models dear to the hearts of all who lived in the 1930s. World War II found him best to remember is the Ohlsson .23 purchased with his mustering out pay.

Doc worked his way through Mississippi College as a lifeguard, being rewarded with a small room under the pool itself to live in. He taught school and was principal in Tupelo, Mississippi.

He subsequently attended the University of Tennessee Dental School in Memphis, where his first exposure to Radio Control pattern flying came to be.

His pattern flying is legendary today. Doc won the Masters in 1969 in Indianapolis. He came in second in the 1970 Nats to the immortal Jim Kirkland. Soon his good sound judgment of competitors took hold and dominated his time at big contests. In 1971, Doc was team manager for the Radio Control team at Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and chief judge at Las Vegas, Nevada. He was chief pattern judge at the 1976 bicentennial at the Dayton, Ohio, Nats. Also in 1976, he was chief judge in the South Africa World Championships, his way being paid for by the South African Association of Radio Flyers. In 1977, he was a U.S. judge at the World Championships.

When I saw him last year he was busy judging in the hot sun to help others enjoy our wonderful sport and the next time you see him, he will probably be doing the same thing – helping others, making it possible for newcomers to compete successfully and fairly and enjoy expert judging.

Doc Edwards lives quietly with his beautiful wife, Jackie, in Mississippi, practicing dentistry and Radio Control flying. Jackie goes to contests with him and sometimes helps tabulate at the tables.

For all of the new modelers that you have helped with your managing and your judging, for the \$1,000 contribution you made to the Academy to become a Life Member, thanks from all of us to you, Doc Edwards.

## **Addendum**

Dr. Edwards' wife, Jackie, passed away on June 2, 1998. He remarried on February 2, 2000 to a former classmate he met in the first grade, George H. Hahnan Tate, whose husband died shortly before Jackie.

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