



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of BURNIS R. FIELDS, JR.

April 1, 1925 to December 4, 1994

Started modeling in 1932

AMA #5049 (number transferred to his wife after his death)



Written & Submitted by DHF (09/2002); Transcribed & Edited by SS (09/2002)

Career:

- Started building Free Flight models at age seven, later got into Control Line and then Radio Control
- An original member of the Jacksonville (Florida) Model Airplane Club and the Flying Rebels of Jacksonville
- Served in the Navy; worked on airplanes and flew models in competition
- Developed programs within modeling organizations to assist youth
- Served as AMA experimental aircraft inspector for planes over 55 pounds
- Served as president of the Gateway Radio Control Club in Jacksonville, Florida, and of the Palatka Sunflyers of Palatka, Florida
- Served as an AMA contest director and District V frequency coordinator
- Flew in competitions throughout the United States
- His 1/4-scale Stearman is on display at the U.S. Naval Museum in Pensacola, Florida
- Worked with the Jacksonville city government for years developing Jacksonville's first model airport
- Belonged to the AMA, International Miniature Aircraft (IMAC), Quarter Scale Aircraft Association (QSAA), Model Engine Collectors, Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) and many other aviation organizations
- Wrote product reviews, designed scale models and wrote articles for model magazines
- Had a hobby shop in Jacksonville for 21 years

Honors:

- 1998: AMA Pioneer Award, presented posthumously

Dorothy H. Fields (AMA number 5049) wrote and submitted this biography of her husband, Burnis R. Fields, Jr.

Biography of a Fallen Modeler – Loved and Respected by All

By Dorothy H. Fields

Burnis R. Fields, Jr., affectionately called “Bernie” by modelers and friends, was born on April 1, 1925 in Americus, Georgia.

At the early age of seven, he started building Free Flight models. Charles Lindbergh was introduced to Burnis in Americus, Georgia, and that truly started his young life into aviation.

Bernie was one of the original members of the Jacksonville (Florida) Model Airplane Club and Flying Rebels of Jacksonville. Then he went into the Navy where he worked on airplanes and flew models in competition.

In 1948, he met and married Dorothy Fields and for their honeymoon, they went to an air show and model meet. They later had three children – Linda, Diane and John Richard.

Starting in Free Flight, he progressed to Control Line and as an adult ventured into Radio Control. Competition was always an adventurous way of judging his own work and improving himself.

First and foremost, Bernie wanted to help many young people. Therefore, he developed programs within the modeling organizations to assist them.

In the AMA, Bernie was AMA experimental aircraft inspector for planes over 55 pounds from the beginning of the program until his death.

He was president of two clubs – Gateway Radio Control Club in Jacksonville, Florida, and Palatka Sunflyers of Palatka, Florida. He also held positions in the AMA – Contest Director (1978 to 1994) and District V frequency coordinator (from its inception until his death). He flew models in competitions across the U.S.

Two of the last models he designed and built were a 1/4-scale Stearman, which is on display at the U.S Naval Museum in Pensacola, Florida, and a 1/3-scale Smith Miniplane.

Bernie worked for many years with the Jacksonville city government, designing and developed Jacksonville's first model airport – 103rd Street Flying Fields – which was used for 15 years. It included three runways, taxiways, a shelter, etc.

He belonged to the AMA, International Model Aircraft (IMAC), Quarter Scale Aircraft Association (QSAA), Model Engine Collectors, Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) and many other aviation organizations.

He wrote product reviews, designed scale models and wrote articles for model magazines.

Burnis was given the Pioneer Award from the AMA in 1998 after his death.

He believed in the hobby and did his best to promote it by finding ways to promote youth activities in aviation – as he put it – “Our future!”

He also had a hobby shop in Jacksonville for 21 years.

*(signed) Dorothy H. Fields, AMA 5049
September 26, 2002*

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