

## Model Aviation Hall of Fame

# Class of 2007

**ESTABLISHED IN** 1969, the Model Aviation Hall of Fame honors those men and women who have made significant contributions to the sport of aeromodeling.

The list of members is long and distinguished. These people have made contributions to model aviation through volunteer or administrative activities, product development, competition performance, or a variety or combination of activities.

The Hall of Fame Selection Committee is composed of past AMA presidents and one Hall of Fame member selected from

each of the 11 districts by the respective vice presidents.

Each year a new class is inducted into the Model Aviation Hall of Fame and the winners are announced in *MA*. Anyone may submit a Hall of Fame nomination form.

For a nomination form or further information, contact Jackie Shalberg at (765) 287-1256, ext. 511, or find the current form online at [www.modelaircraft.org](http://www.modelaircraft.org), document 152.

The committee has selected the following people for the 2007 Model Aviation Hall of Fame.

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### Verlin (Bud) Atkinson 1925-2007

Boy Scouts are considered outstanding American citizens. They possess courage, initiative, loyalty, and leadership. Anyone who has had the pleasure of meeting Verlin “Bud” Atkinson could see that this great aeromodeler got his start within this prestigious organization. Bud learned skills in the Scouts that would shape the rest of his life.

Bud Atkinson was born July 11, 1925, in Kansas City, Missouri. He was active in sports in high school and earned his letter in football.

While still in high school Bud enlisted in the AAC and attended school to become a mechanic and radio operator. He served our country during World War II as a tail gunner and co-pilot on B-24 bombers. Bud earned the American Campaign Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal during his service.

Encouraged by his father and the Boy Scouts, Bud began building and flying models at the age of 12. He experimented with many aspects of model aviation before choosing RC Scale in which he quickly excelled. His experiences included FF, CL, indoor gliders, hand-launched gliders, Pylon Racing, and Scale. Bud was even the first person in the Kansas City area to fly RC helicopters.

Bud began his professional career as a cabinet maker and furniture finisher—both skills acquired from his uncle—at the age of 21. His started out at the Duff & Repp Furniture Company and later spent 16 years at Emery, Bird, Thayer as furniture finisher and service representative until it closed in 1968.

Bud took a position as the top furniture finisher for Paynes Furniture until his retirement in 1981. Conceivably, all this experience explains Bud’s extraordinary aptitude for applying award-winning finishes to his airplanes.

Bud designed, built, and kitted many models throughout his model aviation career. Among these were the Stits Flut-R-Bug, Corbin Super Ace, Stits Playboy, Mooney M-20, F-4U Corsair, and many more. Some of Bud’s designs were kitted by companies such

as ACE R/C, Sig, and Midwest Products. Various modeling sources still have his plans available. He was featured on the cover of several magazines with his models.

Bud often shared his knowledge with other modelers. He wrote a column titled “Let’s Talk About Scale” that ran for three years in *American Modeler*. He has written several articles on the construction of his models that were published in various magazines. Bud was always eager to help others get started and excel in model aviation.

As a competitor, Bud took part in countless flying events. He kept many of his trophies on display in a special room set aside in his home. His wife Alice guessed Bud acquired more than 500 awards for his modeling activities.

The earliest trophy in his collection dates back to 1942. His most notable awards include a Testors Award plaque for best finish on a model and first-place trophies in numerous Scale and Nats events.

Bud passed away on March 21, 2007, after an extended illness. The 49<sup>th</sup> Mid America Jumbo Squadron held its annual Jumbo Jamboree in Bud’s memory on August 25, 2007.

Bud had a hand in the formation of the squadron—the only International Miniature Aircraft Association (IMAA) club in the Greater Kansas City area. Jim Cianciolo, AMA District VI associate vice president, presented Alice with his award for the Model Aviation Hall of Fame during the jamboree.

Susan Calvin, sponsor for Bud’s Hall of Fame nomination, wrote, “All who have known Bud have benefited from his life example and his untiring efforts to improve model aviation and those who participate in it.”

Bud devoted more than 60 years to the hobby. He lived the principles instilled in him at age 9. Verlin “Bud” Atkinson is a Scout in every sense of the word, serving his country, mentoring and teaching others, and being the kind of person people enjoy being with.

Throughout adulthood Bud continued as an active supporter of Scouting and often invited Scouts to his home for model airplane building.

### Mike Gretz Montezuma, Iowa

Mike Gretz was born January 26, 1952, in Mankato, Minnesota. He got his start in model aviation building balsa gliders and rubber-powered stick models made by American Junior and North Pacific. He thoroughly studied the instructions and experimented with bending the control surfaces. His little modifications enabled his airplanes to fly much better than those his friends built.

Mike’s first experience with gas-powered models was observing his uncles who flew FF and CL models. Still a boy at the time, Mike’s teenage uncles wouldn’t let him play with their precious pieces of work. He instead watched them build and fly. When his family relocated to Waterloo, Iowa, in 1960, Mike spent time watching CL pilots fly their models in the park a block from his house.

In 1968 Mike purchased his first gas model: a Sterling Ringmaster 1/2A CL model with a Cox Babe Bee .049 engine. He assembled the model with his younger brother’s assistance. In



**Bud Atkinson devoted more than 60 years to aeromodeling.**

exchange for his help, Mike had to let his brother fly it. The brothers taught themselves how to run the engine and fly the aircraft in only a few days.

His family moved back to Mankato in 1969 where Mike became acquainted with Michael Stott and his father Arnold, operator of the local hobby shop. Arnold saw his attraction to model airplanes and became his mentor. Mike credits Arnold with showing him that model aircraft could be more than just a hobby.

Mike entered his first contest at age 18. He placed first at the 1970 Mankato Modelers AAA-rated CL contest in the Senior Stunt category, flying a hybrid airplane consisting of a salvaged Sig Chipmunk wing and a profile fuselage of his own design.

Mike participated in numerous contests after his first win in Mankato and in 1974, after only six years in the hobby, he competed in his first World Championships, placing fourth overall.

Mike has been a seven-time United States team member as well as the team manager in FAI World Championships competition. He received AMA's FAI Distinguished Performance Award for multiple Scale World Championships and the FAI Scale World Championships honored him with distinguished performance awards in 1976, 1984, 1986, and 1988.

He is the only person to win first place at the AMA Nats in CL Scale and RC Scale. Mike has been awarded the High Flight Points Award as well as the National Association of Scale Aeromodelers' Flight Achievement Award a number of times in Scale competition. He has received achievement awards and high static score awards on multiple occasions.

Sig Manufacturing hired Mike in January 1972 at its headquarters in Montezuma, Iowa. His responsibilities extended throughout various departments of the organization. His job titles ranged from product engineer to advertising director.

At Sig, Mike was responsible for product design, systems engineering, quality control, and sales and product support. He has designed and brought to market dozens of Sig models and other related products, including Sig's first ARF.

Mike was the leader of Sig's engineering and production departments while the company made the transition into the computer age. With his assistance and inspiration, Sig became the first major manufacturer in the industry to produce laser-cut model airplane kits.

Aside from model construction, Mike has a strong talent for writing and photography. He has been published in *MA* several times covering

**Mike Gretz is a seven-time member of the US Scale World Championships team.**



**Mike Gretz and the crew of the first KidVenture program at Oshkosh, Wisconsin.**

Nats RC Scale. Other articles, photography, and models have run in *Model Airplane News*, *Scale R/C Modeler*, *Hobby Merchandiser*, and *R/C Report*.

In 1997 Mike teamed with Shawn Elliot of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) and co-founded the KidVenture program, which introduces youth to model airplanes.

Initially the program allowed participants to experience flight using gas-powered CL models. It has grown throughout the years to incorporate building and flying an FF model, demonstrations of RC park flyers, model rockets, flight simulators, and many other aviation-oriented activities for kids.

Every year approximately 2,000 kids attend KidVenture to experience the thrill of model aviation.

## Mathew J. Kania 1917-1997

In 1927 Charles Lindbergh made history as the first man to fly nonstop across the Atlantic Ocean. Lindbergh raised standards in aviation through his accomplishment and inspired children to achieve their own piloting goals.

Mathew J. Kania was a child inspired by Lindbergh. He began building models in early 1927 with construction that was chiefly balsa and Ambroid. He was primarily dedicated to rubber band-powered aircraft, but did make hand-launched and towline gliders.

Mathew's first fuselage built-up model was sketched from a 3/4-view image printed in a newspaper: the Spirit of Saint Louis. He assembled it from balsa and shoebox tissue paper with rubber cement for adhesive. While the model did not fly well, it drew much attention from his neighbors.

Mathew continued building rubber band-powered models and started bringing them to school. It was here that the Sisters of the Catholic school saw his work and believed it was good. They encouraged Mathew to take his models to hobby and craft shows.

When he was 15, a hobby shop owner asked Mathew to design a baby ROG model. The model would have to take off from the ground and fly for 30 seconds. It was Mathew's first commissioned design and it was kitted and sold to junior high schools for hobby classes. This same shop owner also bought Mathew his first Brown Junior engine.

Mathew's baby ROG was the first of many models produced in his career. They were kitted by companies such as Megow Corporation, P.D.Q. Products, and Sterling Models. He designed models including the Super Clown, Flying Quaker, Stardust, and Ringmaster.

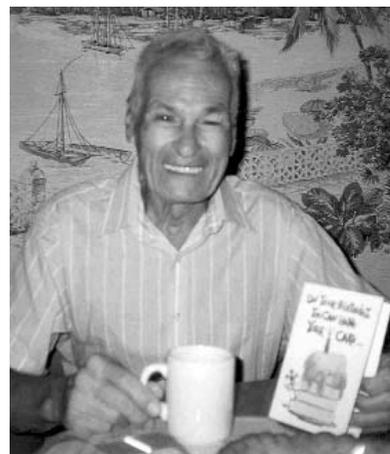
The Ringmaster is Mathew's most famous and possibly the most frequently produced and built kit of all time. Originally developed in 1950, the Ringmaster is still winning contests today.

At the 2006 Nats five of these models placed within the top 10 in their divisions. The design has also developed into a series of models.

The Megow Corporation employed Mathew in 1939 as a designer and draftsman. During that time, he built the Megow Soaring Eagle for the 1939 New York World's Fair.

Mathew worked his way through the organization to become chief engineer in 1946. He moved on to P.D.Q. Products Company as chief engineer and production manager in 1948.

Mathew's career at the Megow Corporation was interrupted by a stint in the US Navy during World War II. He completed training in 1944. While in the service, Mathew brought some of his CL models



**Mathew Kania on his 80th birthday.**