



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of JIM SHINOHARA 1929-1997



Written by DS (2017); Reformatted by JS (04/2019)

The following was submitted by Dave Shadel for Jim Shinohara's nomination for the AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame. Jim Shinohara was inducted into the AMA Model Aviation Hall of Fame in 2017.

Application of Jim Shinohara to the Hall of Fame

My first encounter with Jim Shinohara came at the NMPRA Formula 1 Championship race in 1976. It was my first year competing in F1 racing, and although I had heard about Jim assisting young racers with limited funds, we had not previously met.

Since I was new to the pylon racing game, I didn't have a lot of backup equipment to draw from. During an early heat race, my number one aircraft and engine combo were destroyed in a midair, and my backup aircraft and engine weren't quite up to the task of racing against the best pylon racers in the country at that time. As I sat in the pits pondering the situation, Jim walked up out of the blue and asked if I needed an engine. It would have been impossible to say no when offered this kind of high-end help. The funny part is one round later I was handing the engine back to Jim with an apology that it had blown up and if there were any charges to repair it to let me know. He took it back, said no problem and walked away. Little did I know that this first exchange with Jim would shape the future of pylon racing for myself and the rest of the racing world.

A couple of weeks later received a call from Jim asking if I needed an airplane. Well yes, after losing one at the race I surely did need another. The season was over for 1976, and I already started building another airplane, but as Jim knew, you could never have too many. A month later, Jim showed up with a new, ready-to-paint racer. For the next 5 months, all he talked about was getting ready for the next race and how many airplanes he was building and for who. His excitement never seemed to end when it came to racing model airplanes.

As the years went by, with Jim calling and me piloting, and both of us getting better by the year, it soon was apparent to everyone racing that we were a force to be reckoned with at every race we attended. I wasn't the only person Jim was helping either, and at time he was building as many as 30 airplanes a year for many competitors. Jim paid for most of these out of pocket, or sometimes asked for a racer kit, some balsa wood, or some epoxy in exchange for him building an airplane. It didn't stop there either, as he was always hauling other racer's equipment, providing fuel for competitors coming into California to race, some from as far away as Japan and Europe. Jim helped an almost countless number of fliers during our 21 years racing together and was known as a friend to all competitors worldwide.

My contest successes are well documented, but none would have happened without Jim's help. With Jim as my friend, caller and mentor, we won every significant event, many times in multiples. We competed on 7 FAI F3D pylon racing teams from 1985 to 1997, were world champions 3 times and stood proudly on the podium representing the USA 6 times. We won the NMPRA F1 Points Championship 10 times, AMA F1 National Championship 7 times, and the NMPRA F1 National Championship 8 times. In addition, we won the triple crown of pylon racing 3 times. No other team was able to accomplish that feat even once.

Jim embodied what aeromodelling is all about. He gave freely of time and money to modelers worldwide, for more than 25 years. Jim helped more people enjoy pylon racing than even I can remember. Many of those he helped in the early years are members of the who's who of pylon racing lore. He was loved and respected by modelers, and when he passed away at the F3D World Championships in 1997, all of us suffered a huge loss and created a hole that would never again be filled.

Twenty years after he passed, there are people still racing that Jim mentored and would have been extremely proud of. They include:

- Bob Smith – Multi-time National F1 Champion, Past President of NMPRA, and 2016 AMA Hall of fame inductee.
- Travis Flynn - Q40 National Champion and multi-time USA pylon team member.
- Dan Kane, Jr. - Past NMPRA President, Q40 National Champion, and multi-time USA pylon team member.
- Gary Schmidt - Q40 National Champion and USA pylon team member.
- Jim Allen - Q40 National Champion, AMA Contest Director, and noted designer of numerous racing designs.
- Richard Verano - F1 and Q40 National Champion, multi-time USA pylon team member, and FAI F3D World Champion.

I was honored by membership into the Hall of Fame in 2016 based on my lifetime competition credentials. Jim Shinohara also deserves this honor since we worked together as a TEAM. In fact, Jim deserves the honor even more so than I because he helped so many achieve world class racing status.

Does Jim Shinohara deserve a place in the AMA HOF? Based on his many accomplishments, I and many others feel that he does.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Shadel AMA 19236
Hall of Fame 2016

Note: In 2013, Jim Shinohara was inducted into the National Miniature Pylon Racing Association (NMPRA) Hall of Fame.

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