



The AMA History Project Presents: Autobiography of GERALD (JERRY) NELSON

**Modeler, Model Manufacturer, Competitor,
Pioneer, Innovator**



Born September 27, 1937 Began modeling in 1946
AMA #2025

Written & Submitted by GN (06/1996) and printed in AAM (05/1968); Transcribed by NR (11/1996); Edited by SS (2002), Updated by JS (03/2009, 11/2016), Reformatted by JS (11/2009)

Career:

- Produced first ready to fly Radio Control model commercially
- Developed first fully acrobatic all aluminum Radio Control aircraft, the 100 inch wingspan AL-1
- Member of 1963 AMA FAI Radio Control Acrobatic team
- Member of 1965 AMA FAI Radio Control Acrobatic team
- Charter member of the League of Silent Flight # 28

Honors:

- 1967: AMA Distinguished Service Award
 - 1979: Vintage RC Society Hall of Fame Award
 - 1979: Howard McEntee Award
 - 1998: Model Aviation Hall of Fame
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Jerry Nelson wrote the following biographical information.

Modeling Discipline

- Radio Control; 50 Years in Modeling.

Licenses/Ratings

- Private Pilot with single engine land
- Glider and instrument rating
- A&P license
- Radio Amateur Technician license

Current occupation

- Manufacture of supplemental aircraft oxygen. (full scale)
- Equipment for general aviation
- Manufacture and Distributor of Radio Control modeling supplies

Noteworthy Modeling Accomplishments / Achievements, etc.

- First competition victory, age 12, 1st place Novice U-Control Stunt

- First Radio Control contest entered, 1956 AMA Nationals (Nats), 1st place rudder only
- Designed over 50 Radio Control aircraft from 1/2 A's to:
 - AMA/FAI Pattern
 - Pylon Racers
 - Sailplanes
 - Standoff Scale
 - Several 1/4 Scale projects

Developed

- First all fiberglass Radio Control model, a 12 foot span KA6E sailplane over 25 years ago.
- Also produced first ready to fly Radio Control model commercially.
- Recently developed first fully acrobatic all aluminum Radio Control aircraft, the 100 inch wingspan AL-1.

Other achievements

- Past AMA Radio Control Contest board chairman
- Started 40 powered Formula I pylon race event and NMPRA racing association over 25 years ago
- Introduced turn around pattern event with biplanes and IMAC scale acrobatic pattern association, both events are still active competition categories in the AMA rulebook
- Instrumental in early development of Radio Control sailplane competition events
- One of the original members of the League of Silent Flight, Number 28
- Contest director four times for Tournament of Champions pattern event sponsored by Circus
- Circus Hotels
- Instrumental in presenting basic concept of turn around pattern to national and international Radio Control pattern fliers (later adopted by FAI) and later the design requirement of requiring a scale acrobatic aircraft
- Member of 1963 AMA FAI Radio Control Acrobatic team
- Team member of 1965 AMA FAI Radio Control Acrobatic team
- FAI jury member for 1977 Radio Control World Acrobatic Championships
- Written numerous articles and published plans in many national and international model magazines
- Recipient of Howard McEntee award in 1967
- Recipient of AMA Distinguished Service Award in 1967
- Recipient of VR/CS Hall of Fame Award in 1979

Current Modeling Activity

- Promoting giant scale Radio Control. District Director for IMAA.
- Member of Canby Dusters Radio Control Club, Canty, Oregon. Promoting the concept of Radio Control prototype scale. 1/4 to 1/3 scale homebuilt style aircraft that are not scale, but easily could be if they were actually built in full scale.

- Developing Radio Control aircraft, primarily scale, that are built from similar construction materials as the full-scale aircraft.
- All aluminum designs and stainless steel tube fabric covered aircraft, especially 1930-1946 aircraft. Concept is to build miniature aircraft, not model airplanes.
- Designing Radio Control aircraft with Computer Aided Drafting equipment.

(Signed) Gerald (Jerry) Nelson 6/96

The following was published in the January 1999 issue of Model Aviation magazine.

Jerry Nelson, Hillsboro, Oregon, a youngster at age 59, has been modeling for a half-century. He holds a private pilot's license with glider and instrument rating. He also holds an A&P and Amateur Radio Technician license.

From a first place Control Line Prevision Aerobatics win at age 12, Jerry went on to compete in Pattern, Pylon, Sailplanes, and Scale. He has designed over 50 Radio Control models. Two notable achievements involved developing the first all-fiberglass Radio Control model, a KA6E sailplane with a wingspan of 12 feet. Recently, he created a fully aerobatic, all-aluminum, 100-inch Radio Control model. Currently, he operates Nelson Aircraft Company, which supplies a variety of modeling materials.

Jerry has been very active from an administrative standpoint. He is a past Radio Control Contest Board Chairman. Over 25 years ago, he started 40 sized Formula I and MNPRA racing associations. Jerry also introduced the turn around Pattern event with biplanes and started IMAC, a Scale Aerobatic Pattern association.

He was a U.S. team member of the 1963 and 1965 FAI F3A Aerobatic World Championship competition. In 1977, he served as a jury member at the FAI event in Springfield, Ohio. On three occasions, Jerry served as the Contest Director for the famous Tournament of Champions in Las Vegas.

Jerry has written numerous articles and published plans in many national and international magazines. He was given the AMA Distinguished Service Award in 1967 and is a recipient of the Howard McEntee award. Currently, he is a member of the Canby Dusters Radio Control Club and is a district director for IMAA.



The following was published in the May 1968 issue of American Aircraft Modeler magazine.

Jerry Nelson Joins Staff of American Aircraft Modeler

We are pleased to announce the addition of Jerry Nelson to our staff as contributing editor,

effective with this issue. It will be Jerry's mission to report on West Coast activities, and to assist the publisher and editor in the acquisition of local material for publication.

Famous for his many popular RC designs in magazines all over the world, and for his chairmanship of the group that organized the Goodyear rules, he has a long list of other achievements on his record. Member of the 1966-67 AMA RC Contest board - chairman this year - he was on the 1963 International Team representing the U.S. (team manager in 1967). Active in RC competition since 1956, he attended meets in Japan, Belgium, Mexico and Germany. He is U. S. correspondent to German Flug magazine.

With Orbit during 1966-67, he is now producing his own ready-to-fly 12-ft RC glider, with other designs and accessories to follow. Having designed and flown more than 50 RC models, and worked in his dad's R&D shop as an engineer, he was well qualified to organize his own company called Nelson Model Products, Inc.

Now 30 years old, Jerry holds AMA number 2025, NMPRA Racing number 12A, Radio Call WA6YTA. He also is a licensed airplane and glider pilot - 300 hours, mostly gliders. His interests are not just radio - he is an accomplished free flighter and Nordic fan as well.

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