



# The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of RALPH "BUD" TENNY

September 9, 1931 - October 7, 2005  
AMA #16718



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*The following was written by Don DeLoach and printed in the January 2006 issue of Model Aviation magazine.*

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## **Ralph "Bud" Tenny 1931-2005**

Indoor FF lost one of its giants when Ralph "Bud" Tenny died peacefully in his home on October 7, 2005. Bud was a master craftsman, designer, writer, and tireless supporter of Indoor FF. He leaves behind Jody, his wife of 42 years, two children, one grandchild, and one great-granddaughter.

Bud was born in Kansas City, Kansas in 1931 and attended high school in Iola, Kansas. After graduation in 1949, he joined the Air Force and served as an aircraft engine instructor during the Korean War.

After four years of military service, Bud moved to the Dallas, Texas area and studied engineering at Arlington State College and Southern Methodist University. His engineering/technical career spanned four decades, mostly for Rockwell, Texas Instruments, and his own computer company.

Bud's modeling resume is vast. At age 17, he was active in CL Combat and Stunt. Then he attended his first Indoor contest at the Kansas City Memorial Auditorium. He built a lightened Jetco ROG – his first indoor model – and the rest in history.

By the time the 1960 AMA Nats came to Dallas, Bud was one of Indoor's top supporters. The Indoor events were held at the Will Rogers Coliseum in Fort Worth and generated much publicity. This provided a springboard for Bud to launch the National Indoor Model Airplane Society (NIMAS) – AMA's first SIG.

At this time, Bud began publishing *Indoor News and Views* – the first Indoor-only newsletter and the voice of NIMAS. He published it until the mid-1980s when a number of replacement editors offered to step in. *Indoor News and Views* is still going to this day, thanks to the seed Bud planted.

Bud was heavily involved with the F1D Indoor Team Selection program in the early 1960s. He managed three Team Selection cycles and was the Team Manager three times, including for the second-place US team at the 1966 World Championships in Debrecen, Hungary.

In the mid-1960s, Bud served as Chairman of the FF Contest Board. When the Indoor Contest Board (ICB) was formed in the late 1970s, Bud was immediately approached by AMA to chair it

and to handpick the district representatives. Under Bud's leadership, the ICB membership remained basically unchanged for 25 years.

Bud wrote the "FF Indoor" column for *MA* since its very first issue in 1975 through 2004 when his health finally precluded him from this activity.

Bud's columns were filled with practical solutions, detailed advice, and excellent photos. They regularly contained information on Indoor sites and contest dates around the country and the world with a list of contact names. Bud's community building kept modelers informed and active. "U.S. Indoor modeling is held together by Bud Tenny!" proclaimed the National Free Flight Society when Bud was elected to its prestigious Hall of Fame in 1979.

Bud's impact on Indoor FF is immeasurable. He was one of the first US observers of the dominant European F1D fliers of the 1960s. He brought that intelligence back to the US fliers through the pages of *Indoor News and Views* and the results were astounding.

Of the 19 F1D World Championships held between 1968 and 2004, US teams won 10 team golds and an unbelievable 15 individual golds. There was never a year during that period that the US did not have at least one top-three finish.

Indoor FF had no greater mentor than Bud Tenny. I met him in 1985 as a fidgety and inexperienced 12-year-old attending my first Indoor contest in Bedford, Texas. I remember Bud's beautifully built models and the extreme care he took in handling them. In contrast, my models were crude and overweight, but with Bud's help, we got them to fly.

I would go on to learn most of what I know about Indoor flying from Bud and a handful of there Bedford regulars. Thanks to Bud, I continue to enjoy flying Indoor to this day, although I will never approach his patience level or attention to detail.

Jerry Murphy, one of Bud's oldest flying friends and currently Chairman of the FF Contest Board, summed up Bud's contributions this way: "I believe the fact that the U.S.A. has been such a powerful force in Indoor FAI competition is a tribute to Bud's work in building a strong community of Indoor fliers."

A strong community we are, indeed. Thanks, Bud

-Don DeLoach

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