



## The AMA History Program Presents: Biography of NANCY H. RILEY



Written by NR (c. 2003); Transcribed and edited by JS (12/2007), Reformatted by JS (01/2010)

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*The following is an autobiography excerpt from the publication "Who's Who in AMA, 2003, District V."*

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As a child of six, I used to accompany my dad to the local airport in Northfield, Ohio, where he flew airplanes. I was in awe of those beautiful machines that would glide through the air like a bird, and spent a lot of time in the air with Dad in his *J-3 Cub* or *Great Lake Trainer*.

It was natural that in the early 1940s I built my first static model airplane. Boy was I proud of that model, displayed in a prominent place in my room. This rapidly led to hand-launched gliders and rubber-powered models.

By the mid-1940s, I became interested in full-scale flying and joined the Civil Air Patrol. One of our activities was to assist at the Cleveland Air Races. What a thrill that was! At the age of fourteen, I started to take flying lessons at our local airport, but it was not handed to me. I had to work in the restaurant for my flying time. At 16, I flew a *65-HP Luscombe 8A* solo and soon earned my private pilot's license. It was at this local airport where I met my future husband, a pilot interested in model aviation.

In the mid-1960s, my husband, our two oldest boys, and I were charter members of the Northfield Aeromodelers in Northfield, Ohio. Our primary interests at that time were U-Control and Free Flight. My husband also flew indoor microfilm airplanes.

Also in the 1960s, my husband started experimenting with Radio Control models. As I had lost the central vision in my right eye in 1975, I was content to accompany him to the flying field and be his pit crew. When we moved to Florida, I also became interested in flying Radio Control, and got back into building, determined to overcome my eye problem.

I became very active in the Highlands Radio Control Club in Sebring, Florida, assisting the event coordinator in putting on air shows from 1992 through 1995. I served as Secretary and Treasurer, as well as Newsletter Editor for three years. In 1997, I was awarded Leader Member designation from the AMA.

In December of 1999, a few of us felt we needed a flying field of our own in Lake Placid. Therefore, I chartered a club in Lake Placid and began to search for a flying field. Most of 2000 was spent searching for a field. Finally, in December of 2000, I signed an agreement with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for a three-year period. It was just a piece of scrubland, but there were no houses, no telephone poles or wires, or any obstructions of any

kind. With everyone pulling together, we soon had a beautiful flying field and as of September of 2002, our club had grown to 57 members.

I was asked to serve as an Associate Vice President of AMA District 5 and am currently fulfilling these duties. It is a lot of fun going to the different flying fields, seeing old friends, and meeting new friends.

Currently, I am a member of the LadyHawks, a national association formed for the purpose of fostering and advancing the participation of women in the building and operation of model aircraft. I enjoy building as much as flying, and have just finished my first Almost-Ready-to-Fly (ARF) model. This has convinced me that I much prefer to build a kit as opposed to assembling an ARF.

Model flying is a family affair with us. My husband and I can usually be seen at the flying field together. When our son from Ohio comes for a visit, the three of us are usually at the flying field together.

Keep 'em flying!

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