

AMCA Pioneer: Trudi Johnson-Richards

Honorary Member

If the AMCA was an actual motorcycle rather than a membership organization, then Trudi Johnson-Richards would be a vital part of the engine that never fails to start and always gets you to your destination.

Trudi and her husband, Jerry, hail from Shoreview, Minnesota, where they've been involved with modern and vintage bikes for a long time.

"I joined the AMCA in 1985," Trudi says. "The Viking Chapter was displaying bikes in a mall in New Brighton, Minnesota, and we stopped to ask questions. We liked what we heard, and we ended up joining the group.

"Those were different times back then," she recalls. "The Chapter was primarily made up of British-bike owners, and we had the only Harley. When I attended general meetings, I was the only woman."

But Trudi notes that things have changed quite a bit over the past 29 years as she progressed into leadership positions in the Chapter, and then the National Club.

"I was the Viking secretary and treasurer back when the Chapter consisted of about 40 members," she says. "But as the Viking Chapter grew, I recommended that the secretary and treasurer be separate positions."

The need to split those duties is clear when you consider that the Viking Chapter, which celebrated its 40th anniversary this year, now has 175 members, the newest of whom joined at the Viking National Meet in June.

And while the Chapter has grown, the Viking Meet has evolved, too. Originally, Trudi recalls, the Viking Chapter and the Omaha Chapter alternated National Meets, with the Viking group hosting an event one year in Minnesota and the Omaha group hosting the next year in LeMars, Iowa.

"Then the Omaha Chapter decided to end their national meets, and Viking started running one every year," she says. In more recent years, the Omaha Chapter has come back to the schedule with a National Meet in Fremont, Nebraska, offering AMCA members two National Meets in the region.

Over all those years, Trudi has retained her role as a leader of the Viking Chapter. But fortunately for



It's an honor: Trudi Johnson-Richards has been an AMCA member for 29 years, and she's served on the AMCA Board for 18 years. In June, she was presented with a well-deserved Honorary Membership by AMCA President Richard Spagnolli.

Denny Lee Thrush, who stepped in to take over The Antique Motorcycle magazine in 2008."

After serving as National Secretary for years, Trudi was asked to do even more, and as usual, she accepted the challenge. In 2012, she was elected Vice President of the AMCA by her peers on the Board, and Kelli Webb-Stauffer succeeded

her as secretary.

the AMCA as a whole, she also found time to pitch in and help at the national level.

"In 1997, I interviewed for the position of secretary, which was held by Dottie Wood (now Mattern)." Trudi got, and then kept, that important job, contributing needed management continuity during a time that saw key changes on the AMCA Board and the Club magazine. To many of the questions that arose during those years, the most common answer was, "Ask Trudi."

Recalling some of those changes, she notes, "I began my term under Bob McClean, who was our longest-serving president. In the beginning, there were two Board meetings each year, the minutes were logged by typewriter and there was no such thing as teleconference calls. The AMCA actually paid for the first computer I used as secretary, and thereafter, all Board members were required to have their own computer."

"During that time, the Judging Program changed under Peter Heintz. Previously, the bikes were judged against each other. Now, each bike stands on its own.

"Pete Gagan, a Canadian, was our next president, followed by Rocky Halter. Richard Spagnolli followed Rocky as President and brought new ideas, increasing the use of teleconference calls to act on issues immediately rather than waiting for the next Board meeting.

"Without Richard's determination, we would not be where we are today," she adds. "We are truly an active Board. One of the best decisions the Board made was to hire Bill Wood, Greg Harrison and

her as secretary.

When the Viking Chapter held its National Meet this year, Trudi got a surprise when she was presented with the Club's highest honor, being named an AMCA Honorary Member for her 18 years (and counting!) of service on the Board.

"I had no idea there would be an award, and was so honored that Richard, and several other close friends and Board members, came to present it to me at our Viking banquet," she says. "Richard gave a welcome speech and asked me to stand. What a surprise!"

The award states: "AMCA Honorary Member, Trudi Johnson-Richards, in recognition of your 18 years of dedicated service on the Board and to the Membership. Your generosity with your time and effort is truly appreciated and has been an inspiration to all who have come to know you in the AMCA."

Trudi's response was typical of the way she has approached her service to the Club since she first joined all those years ago.

"Thank you so much for this award," she said. "It has truly been an honor to be on the Board of the Antique Motorcycle Club of America. This award will always be a fond memory of my service with the AMCA and the members I have worked with through the years."

No, Trudi—thank you, on behalf of all 10,000 AMCA members across the United States and around the world. We appreciate everything you've done for us.—Greg Harrison.