

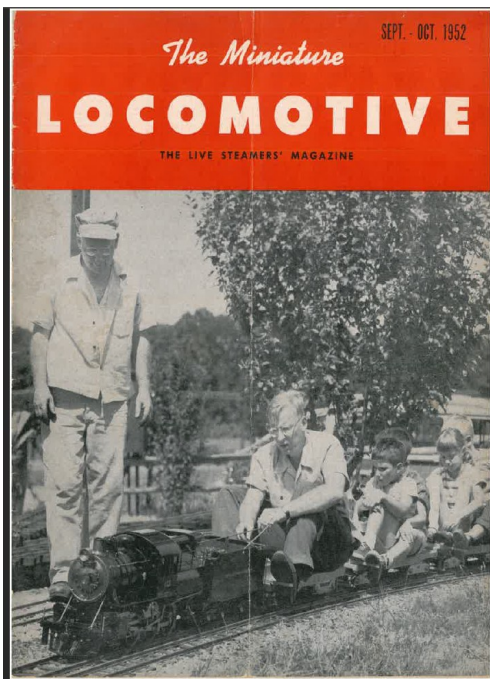


Robert (Bob) Thomas passed on January 17, 2023 at the medical center of his retirement home, Normandy Farms Estates, in Blue Bell, PA. Bob was 95 years old having been born on October 6, 1927 in Philadelphia to George R. and Florence Thomas. He is survived by his wife Phyllis (nee Kingston) of 62 years and two nephews. He was predeceased by an older sister, Dorothy Reefer. Bob spent his early life in Havertown, PA and graduated from Haverford High School in 1942 and from Drexel Institute in 1950 with a degree in Electrical Engineering.

While in high school Bob worked at Herbach and Rademan. It was there that he first learned quality radio construction working on receivers and transmitters, shipboard equipment and Geiger counters. After graduating from Drexel he worked for a brief time as a design engineer for El-Tronics.

In 1951 he joined the RCA Broadcast Systems Division in Camden, NJ. At the time activity in Color television was ramping up and he worked on the design of studio audio/video switchers, distribution systems, and laboratory test equipment. In 1959 he transferred to a video tape recorder design team and he later had responsibility for all signal systems in the RCA broadcast video tape recorder product line.

By 1982 RCA was in somewhat of a down state due to mismanagement so he took an early retirement and joined the ABC Television Network in New York City. This was a big adjustment as he and his wife had decided to stay in their home in Chestnut Hill. This meant he had to rise at 5:30 AM drive to 30th street station, take Amtrak to Penn station, then the subway to ABC on 57th street and back each day. At ABC he evaluated new equipment for the ABC News and Sports department both in the lab and on remotes at political conventions, golf tournaments, Indy 500, and the Olympics. This resulted in quite a bit of world travel. His last years at ABC centered on the new HDTV technology and he retired as Director of Technology in 1992.



Bob had many hobbies the primary ones being amateur radio and the Pennsylvania live steamers (PLS), a group that builds and runs scale steam engines on real tracks. Bob joined PLS as an associate member in 1946 when the club was still in Paoli. He became a regular member in 1966 and was elected president in 1970. The PLS Gazette, which began life as a regular monthly newsletter, was created by Bob to assist with keeping the club together during the challenging time of the move from Paoli to Rahns. Club membership was down because of the move / construction in Rahns. Bob created the PLS Gazette and used it as a way to keep people talking about live steam. Bob wrote the copy and distributed the Gazette with Phyllis' assistance.

In the cover photo to the left taken at the PLS Paoli track, Bob is 24 years old. He has already begun building the tender for his 2.5" gauge B-18 B&O steamer. Standing is his father George.

As an electrical Engineer bob had a vast knowledge of both tube and solid-state electronics. He held both a commercial first class radio telephone license and an amateur radio license first with the call W3QZO in 1950 and later W3NE. He was an avid builder and his construction practices were immaculate. He

became a member of the Philmont Mobile Radio Club in 1953 and that enticed him to build numerous transmitters and receivers to operate on the club frequencies. He build a knockoff of the Central Electronics 20A to drive his Viking II on SSB. Bob preferred building to operating. In later year he started to restore older equipment that he could not afford the first time around.

Bob was one of 12 members of the Frog radio group. This group was founded in 1938 and its membership is made up of individuals with very diverse backgrounds. Bob's time of working for ABC added a lot to the group. In addition his capabilities of designing, building and restoring radio equipment earned him great respect within the group.

Bob was also a member of the Antique Wireless Association (AWA) and the American Radio Relay League (ARRL).

Bob's other hobbies included photography, free flight and RC airplanes, and letterpress printing.



An early photo of Bob's Chestnut Hill Shack when he was W3QZO