

## ~ Val Matteucci ~



May 14, 2022 was a sad day for the sport of pigeon fliers. On this day we lost a true icon, not only to the fliers on Long Island NY, but nationwide. Valentino "Val" Matteucci left to join the pigeon fliers in the sky. Born on June 26, 1932 he leaves behind his loving wife Patricia "Patty" of 53 years and his two daughters, Lorraine and Marianne, and son-in-law Chris, also four grandchildren, Nicholas, Danny, Lucas and Willow.

Val worked before his retirement as an Administration Engineer for Fairchild Camera. Aside from having a full-time job his true passion was pigeons, not only a successful pigeon flier for many years as a partner with his good friend, the late Warren Werbeck, and in later years with his new partner Paul Rego until Paul's untimely death.

Not only was Val's love of racing pigeons, but his passion of being on the forefront of the sport itself. Throughout the 70's, 80's and 90's into the 2000's Val served as the Secretary and Treasurer for the East Meadow Club. In those early years he worked hard to sponsor the EMF futurity that had approximately 150 shippers at that time. Together with the EMF there was an auction race which Val would contact pigeon guys from around the country and local fliers to send birds for the auction race. Then year after year he would collect the YB's and serve as the auctioneer for a very successful race.

In the 1980's he became the Secretary and Treasurer of the Long Island Combine and the Secretary and Treasurer of the Suffolk Nassau Combine, the two large combines on Long Island. At that time the SNF also started a very successful auction race with prize money to equal or surpass the amounts of today's auction races. Val was instrumental in their success and again serving as the auctioneer.

Throughout the 70's, 80's and 90's Val would organize the awards night dinner and dance serving as the MC and then publicize the evenings events with combine results and photos of the night in the Racing Pigeon Bulletin.

Every year the Bethpage Restoration Village in Nassau County would hold the Long Island Fair which was an agricultural fair. There was Val with a small committee and a display of pigeons to promote pigeon racing to the thousands of attendees.

Every year he would also gather donated birds to bring to Massachusetts for the auction in the North West Juniors Club to support and help the youth get off to a start in pigeon racing.

Val has always been a main stay at the IF Conventions helping in any way he could, in 2001 he assisted the Convention Chairman in negotiation with the hotel and marina in the beautiful setting in the heart of the tourist town of Port Jefferson Long Island for a very successful IF Convention. He had also served as auctioneer for the record setting start up auction (before the help of internet auctions) making that convention to those who attended an unforgettable event, not being in a hotel along a highway somewhere in the country, but a setting along the water. In what was thought to be an out of reach option, Val sat down and convinced management to accept the IF at rates that were acceptable.

Val took over the job of IF Secretary and Treasurer of the faltering IF treasury job in 1999 and brought it back to where it should be with a healthy treasury. Retiring from those positions in 2020, Val served as the IF Secretary and Treasurer of the IF. He enjoyed the communication of pigeon fliers across the country listening to any and all issues anyone had.

I could go on and on how Val worked so hard, totally unselfishly, working to promote the pigeon sport but anyone who encountered him personally or just by phone I'm sure can agree with. Val had a wonderful gift of dealing with everyone's issues, solving any and all problems that anyone had, and still always had time for his family.

In 2021 the IF nominated him for the Person Of The Year, in the pigeon world it should have been Person Of A Lifetime for his lifetime of serving the pigeon sport so unselfishly.

Aside from being a wonderful family man, loving his family dearly, he was a friend to everyone, especially those who were close to him and everyone who he encountered through his pigeon life.

Val, you were a friend of so many and a worker for the sport of pigeon flying never to be duplicated, may you rest in peace.

*Submitted by: Erik Hall*