



Dick Kotis

(As nominated by Dick Wilson)

Almost lost on his cluttered desk among stacks of correspondence, lures and lure parts, and a crowded appointment calendar, is a small, walnut mounted bronze plaque which reads, "I fish often to find myself; it's so easy to get lost in the world."

From the beginning when Dick Kotis became President of the Fred Arbogast Company in 1957, he has never forgotten to take time to go fishing or become too busy to devote endless hours and constant energy to advance sport fishing in this country. His concern and his contributions have earned for him a wall full of honors and awards for outstanding service to both the sport and the industry. And because of his dedication to the youngsters of America, he has probably taught the joys and know-how of fishing to more of them than anyone in the industry. Long before he joined the Fred Arbogast Company, Dick was a fisherman.

As a youngster growing up in Cleveland, Ohio, he was a constant companion to his plumber father on weekly outings to Lake Erie and inland lakes and streams all over Northeastern Ohio. While attending Kent State University, where he played varsity football for three seasons in addition to carrying a full course load in the School of Education, he found time on weekends to wet a line.

After graduation from Kent with a BS and an MS in Education, he chose the University of Colorado to pursue a PhD degree. Kotis says with a wry smile, "Colorado had an excellent Doctor's program in education as well as great fishing in the surrounding mountains." While working on his graduate degree, he returned to Kent as an assistant football coach and was

instrumental in organizing and teaching a class in bait and fly-casting in the school's recreational program. The class at Kent was so successful and widely recognized for its excellence, Dick was asked to write a fishing curriculum which was adopted by other colleges and universities in the State of Ohio.

Dick elected to change careers in the spring of 1957 because of a desire to work in the outdoor recreation field. He was hired as a salesman by the Fred Arbogast Company and two years later, named President of Arbogast.

He immediately associated the company and himself with the most active and prestigious organizations devoted to promoting local and national fishing issues, conserving natural fishing resources, and those encouraging participation in the sport, especially among young people. Never known as simply a joiner, his vigorous leadership led to positions on the boards of many of them including:

President -American League of Anglers

Director -Sport Fishing Institute

Board -Fish Ohio Committee. While serving on this committee, Kotis started the Fish Ohio Recognition Program in 1980. Today it is the largest recognition program in America with over 20,000 Ohio anglers enrolled in 1987.

Trustee -Cleveland Woods and Waters Club

Fellow -The International Oceanographic Foundation

Trustee -International Game Fish Association

President -American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association. Dick has served on every committee in the Association.

President -World Series of Golf

He was appointed to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission by Ohio Governor Rhodes; named to the Great Lakes Technical Committee by the

U, S, Department of Health to represent the sportsmen of Ohio to set water quality standards for Lake and which was instrumental in eliminating commercial netting on the lake, has served on a government task force creating fishing regulations in Ohio, and has testified before Congressional committees in Washington, D. C. on offshore trade practices detrimental to the domestic fishing tackle manufacturing industry and in support of the Wallop-Beaux Bill which yearly channels millions of excise tax dollars into improving fishing throughout the country, In 1978, he was awarded the Industry Leadership Award by The Sporting Goods Dealer, one of the country's leading sporting goods trade magazines.

For his outstanding and enthusiastic contributions to sport fishing, Dick is a recipient of the Doug Gleason Award and has been honored by the Boy Scouts of America for his work with local troops and national and international encampments. He originated the concept of fishing directed primarily to children in the audiences at sport shows. He received the prestigious Roger Latham Award from the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association for his service in helping writers produce authoritative and thoughtful articles on fishing. His many sport show, civic club, youth and conservation group seminars have made him one of America's most recognized and respected fishermen.

In spite of a daily schedule crammed with administrative duties associated with his company, Dick makes time for fishing. He allows 180 days a year out of the office to practice what he enjoys doing most--fishing. He usually has a fishing license for every state in the union and uses them! In addition, he has fished internationally in every major fishing area in the world. He participates in 18 tournaments yearly.

For years, he has hosted a Saturday morning call-in radio talk show which is beamed throughout northern and central Ohio. On the show, Dick answers callers' fishing questions, discusses techniques for fishing success, gives fishing reports for area waters, and, one of the most popular topics, shares his favorite fish recipes.

He is a regular guest on syndicated national TV fishing shows where he shares his expertise with viewers. He is on the teaching staff of The Bass Fishing Institute where he conducts a class on advanced bass fishing techniques.

Under his management the, Fred Arbogast Company has had a steady growth record. It has acquired Arndt & Sons, the Prescott Spinner Company, the Tru-Shad Lure Company, and most recently, the Hank Roberts Fly Company. Today, it is one of the very few manufacturers which offers a full line of lures for every type of American fishing.

Few men in this country have unselfishly given so much for so long to sport fishing.

Honorary Member - 1988