

HONORARY MEMBER – TONY SMITH

By Dan Basore, Honorary Member Chairman

The HONORARY MEMBER program recognizes the lure makers who have made the products we admire, collect, memorialize and display. Without them we wouldn't have these wonderful treasures to collect. These lures bear testimony of the evolution of fishing.

One of the honorees added in 2021 is Tony Smith, who many old time NFLCC members have known and respected for his many past contributions to our organization. He was our Vice President in his area, hosted a show in Holland, Michigan for years that was one of the few shows that Bud Stewart, maker of Spoonplugs visited.

He contributed articles published in our Gazette. He, his daughter Tai, and Mike Kech Hosted the Grand Rapids National meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan and he has “ numerous wonderful lure collector friends” as a result.

He found the items we collect to be so inspiring that he was compelled to make some of his own. Tony started making his Macatawa Bait Company lures, decoys and fishing floats in the late 1970's and continues to make them now. Not only did he make these items but completed each one with its own complimentary box.

Several different labels have been used over the years. but the style and patterns have remained similar and distinctive, He estimates he has produced about 2000 pieces and this consumes so much of his interest, time and effort he doesn't attend shows anymore. But he does enjoy seeing them sold, traded and with the help of those who take the time to send him photos of his products in their collections and displays at shows, appreciates this very much.

Many years ago on one of my great lure finds i acquired some of his Macatawa lures and what i learned was the only sign Tony had produced. I gave these to my son Tod Hamilton to sell on eBay. But he was so taken by the sign that it became a fixture in his lure room. Each day on seeing it he is inspired and so happy to be its caretaker.

At this years National show it was a pleasure to see the Macatawa lure displays, talk with collectors of these lures and observe their enthusiasm and the happiness they get from Tony's creations.

Tony also is grateful to all who have supported his induction, which was unanimous by the Board and members, to become an NFLCC HONORARY MEMBER, making him a lasting part of this organization.

Please, will you help make the lure makers happy with their recognition in becoming an Honorary Member and the knowledge of how much their work is appreciated? We do this for those who made lures at least 25 years ago and while they are still living and look forward to **your** nominations.