

MMR 91 Gilbert A. Freitag

By Tom Madden

Gil Freitag of Houston, Texas, has earned his MMR award, becoming No. 91. Many of us are familiar with Gil's modeling efforts: he won the Gold Award at the St. Louis National convention, and his Stoney Creek and Western HO railroad was featured in the April 1975 RMC and July 1982 MR. Achievement Certificates for Cars, Structures, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Chief Dispatcher, Association Volunteer and Association Official led to his award.

An older brother's tinplate layout introduced Gil to the hobby. He built his own tinplate pike when he was about 14, and several others followed until 1959. Marriage and military service combined to convince Gil to switch to HO then, as he had no room to continue in O scale.

After his service stint, Gil, with wife Virginia, returned to Houston and a new home. Two children later, Gil found that the only layout space available was in the attic. Building his first layout there taught Gil perseverance. As he puts it, "It was a 20' x 20' railroad and

why I didn't give up the hobby after this, I don't know. Anyone who has worked in an uninsulated attic in Texas should know what a challenge this is. If it wasn't the heat or the cold, it was the dirt. However, I managed to get the layout about 80% complete for the 1965 LSR convention in Houston."

At this point the Freitag's had four children and, needing more space for both the family and the railroad, added a second story to their house. Thus liberated from the attic, Gil started the present Stoney Creek and Western late in 1966.

Gil joined the NMRA in 1965 and regularly attends both regional and national conventions. He served as a Director of the Lone Star region for six years, and is now the regional Contest Chairman. A Mechanical Engineering graduate of Texas A&M, Gil is a 22-year employee of ARMC O Inc. The Freitag's now have five children: four girls and a boy. Gil's son is developing an interest in the hobby, which Gil values both for the companionship and for the help his son provides.

