



ARTHUR WHITMIRE
1939 – 2011

Theodore Roosevelt once said, “[T]he best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.” On July 4th, 2011, LCOC lost one of its treasures, Executive Vice President Art Whitmire. Art’s early work was that of National Battery Buyer for Sears, where he was responsible for purchasing a billion dollars in batteries each year, a job that involved extensive international travel. In 1993, Art retired from that job to devote *full time* to work he loved and believed to be work worth doing – the collector car hobby. Art, having shed *all* corporate responsibilities, became a sparkplug (no pun intended) in a local Model A club, revitalized the Illinois Blackhawk Region of AACA, and took on a leadership role in the LCOC Lakeshore Region. For the next eighteen years Art worked *full time* at work worth doing – making *his* car clubs better for all.

Art was born on September 11, 1939, in Sumpter, South Carolina. He lived with his grandmother while his father was in the service during World War II. At about the age of eleven he moved to Lima, Ohio. While in high school he moved to Fremont, Ohio. Following high school, Art attended and graduated from Miami of Ohio University. While at Miami, Art was elected President of his fraternity, a forerunner of his elective LCOC offices. Following college Art worked in drapery retail, eventually joined Sears where he held a number of jobs before becoming the Company’s National Battery Buyer in its Chicago headquarters.

In early 1968, while in church, Art’s future mother-in-law noticed him and told Carol Jo about this “nice young man” who had joined the congregation. Two weeks later, Art and Carol started dating. They were married that year on July 13th. Eleven months and one day later, their son, John was born. Three years later their daughter Sherri was born. Both children are married, and Art and Carol have three grandchildren.

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Forty-five years ago Art was diagnosed with a modular spongy kidney. This affliction generates extremely painful bouts of kidney stones. From time-to-time over the years Art would be incapacitated for several days until he was able to pass a stone. In February 2011, while at their winter home in Florida, Art experienced what he believed was another bout of kidney stones. In the next two and one-half months Art continued to experience problems, frequently requiring visits to the local ER. On April 23, while again in an emergency room, a cat-scan *with contrast* was performed, and that's when his cancer was diagnosed. Art first received treatment at the Moffet Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida and later at the University of Wisconsin Cancer Center in Madison, Wisconsin. His final days were spent with his family at the beautiful Ogle County Hospice Home in Oregon, Illinois.

Art's love of cars was not confined to the Lincoln brand. Over the years Art added a Model A Ford, a Pinto Station Wagon, a Mercury Grand Marquis, a Pontiac Convertible, a Cadillac Allante, and a Ford Mustang (to just list a few) to his stable of Lincolns. Growing up, Art had a Sears version of the Vespa Scooter. Several years ago, Art found a "new" Vespa on e-bay, with just four actual miles. It was still in its shipping crate. That, too, is in Art's collection, as well as hundreds of scale models. Art, also took to the air. After moving to Byron Art joined a model airplane flying club and became proficient in building and flying model planes.

It was working with LCOC that Art's passion "to work hard at work worth doing" manifest itself. Art was News Letter Editor and Director of the Lakeshore Region. He also became a National Director at Large, where he served at various times as Vice President of Regions, Membership Chairman, and MidAmerica Assistant National Chief Judge. His most recent office was that of National Executive Vice President. Art was the driving force in assigning and scheduling three years of National Meets. He also took on the task of tabulating meet scores as well as a variety of other chores delegated by the President and the Board. With Carol's help, Art arranged National Board meetings and developed Agenda Books, with reference material for LCOC Directors. He also was a member of the Judging Standards Committee.

While all of this was going on, Art put in place a National AACA meet in Rockford, Illinois for 230 cars. These chores did not prevent Art and Carol from organizing several LCOC and AACA two and three day driving tours to various Midwest locations. Major car shows, regional auctions, and the annual Chicago Auto Show could count on Art being in attendance. Art was looking forward to being named a director of the Lincoln Foundation.

Over the years Art, when not fully occupied with various chores at National Meets, found time to also show several of his Lincolns. At the 2005 ENM in Independence, Ohio, Art's 1956 Premiere Sedan won the William Coughlin Trophy – Best Senior 1949 - 1960 Lincoln or Lincoln Continental.

In closing, what one newsletter editor wrote on learning of Art's terminal cancer states it best, "Art is a good and decent fellow, who shouldn't have had these problems. But, as we all know, life isn't often kind or fair. Over the years, many have had the opportunity to visit and know Art and be impressed by what a fine individual he is. He has done a lot for the club and his death will be a great loss to all of us." Art, the Club is better, much, much better, because of your work. You worked hard, very, very hard at work worth doing. That is the prize of your life. May you now rest in peace.

Jack Fletcher
July, 2011

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Art at the 2007 Mid-America Meet in Itasca, IL.

Art & Carol with other LSR friends at the 2010 Geneva Concours d'Elegance.



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While Art may have been passionate about collector cars, there is no doubt that he loved people. Below Art talks with Barb & Joe Esdale at the 2010 Lake Forest Car Show. He always had time to talk or share an email joke.



Photo courtesy Jack Fletcher

Former Region Director and Newsletter Editor, Art Whitmire, convinced me into being the editor of the Lake Shore Region newsletter as he was preparing to expand his role with the national LCOC organization. I had just finished a 13 year stint as newsletter editor for another club and was reluctant to say the least. Art, more than anyone else, convinced me to get more involved. I'm glad I did as I've met some really wonderful people.

Art, we will never forget you. We will all miss you more than you know. God Bless.

Chris Otis

Newsletter Editor,
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