Boyd Western "Doc" Aigner, the 1980 recipient of the prestigious Buz Buszek Memorial Fly Tying Award, always said he really didn't know why he was so honored. But a quick review of the facts, and a few quotes, would show anyone, including Boyd, what the nominating committee saw when they looked over his qualifications.

Born April 16, 1925 in Nampa, Idaho, he moved with his family to the Pacific Northwest as a child. He was introduced to fishing early, but his first serious introduction to fly fishing came after W.W.II and a four year stint in the Navy as a combat air crewman.

In 1946 he started fly fishing and fly tying. He bought his first fly rod in Coos Bay, Oregon. He had no help from others learning to tie, but he bought the Herter's book and one by Roy Patrick.

He enrolled at Washington State in Pullman, and says by the time graduation rolled around he had fished the black ant hatch on Priest Lake in Idaho, the sedge hatch in British Columbia at LacJuene and pursued steelhead on the Grand Ronde in Oregon.

In 1951 he met some members of the Washington Fly Fishing Club while on a two week summer camp. He'd found a home. Three years later he graduated with a Masters Degree and moved to Seattle. He joined WFFC the same year, 1954. Ever since then he was part of WFFC and other club meetings...teaching fly tying and serving in leadership positions. He had done his share and more.

Read some of his thoughts, see why you think he was a winner:

"It is very tough for a young boy without a father to get to fishing water. I remember how I used to feel about this, and this is why any kid that wants to talk fishing finds a ready ear with me."

"I started to write away for better materials. I scrounged every dead varmint off the road. By persistence, I guess, I gradually found out where to obtain quality materials and appreciate them."

"By no means infer that I am a professional or money involved fly tyer. I seldom kill a fish that I will not eat before sundown, and I do not really approve of fish killed for photography. I also do not associate with people who fish for trophy fish for "fun" or for house decorations."

"I have to give credit to a lot of different people for showing me how to tie flies, not in the feathers and thread sense, but rather in the craft itself. I must mention Dawn Holbrook, Walter Johnson, Ralph Wahl, Wes Drain and Charlie Schroeter in the Seattle area. Cliff Wyatt of Santa Monica taught me the basics of the dry fly...size, configuration and beauty."

Boyd was a charter member of FFF proudly updating Card No. 0456-A2 every year. Since winning the Buszek Award in 1980, he continued a fast pace of teaching fly tying lessons and speaking at club meetings. He had a heart attack and an old ankle injury taken care of in the early 80s. He always said "But the greatest award, as, such, that i have ever received is a copy of the marriage license that Bea signed."

Heaven knows that Bea knew all about Boyd and his fly tying. She put-up with it for a lot of years. She points out that it was his doctorate in psychology that gives Boyd his nickname of "Doc" with so many of his friends and also points out that he taught psychology at Seattle Central College.

In 1983, speaking of Boyd, Bea said, "As a college teacher, he is unemployed during the summer months, and for the past ten years or more, has spent the majority of his time fishing the
Boyd would casually admit to spending "over 100" days a year fishing and said "I have two flies which I consider mine: Chopaka May and my Deer Hair Sedge. I have never named a fly after myself and consider it more or less an individual thing to do so."

Continuing her expose on her husband, Bea said, "For Boyd, fly tying is really a way of life. He often refers to the concept of "The Well-Tied Fly". For Boyd, a fly, like life, must be well put together. The well-tied fly is something to strive for. There must be quality in technique and material. There must be an eye for the insect being represented. There must be an affinity for the fish being stalked. And there must be an awareness of the parts which make the whole of fly fishing real and meaningful."

Bea felt that Boyd received the Buszek Award, in part, because of his remarkable ability to share information about fly tying and fly fishing, plus his patience and willingness to work with fly tyers of all ability levels.

"He ties all year round," Bea would say, "in the fly tying room, at the desk in the study and on the dining room table which has been expanded to accommodate 8-10 tyers at informal winter sessions. As a teacher he seems to be able to instruct with clarity," observed Bea. Many students do significantly better after just a short session with Boyd."

And perhaps most tellingly, Bea's final statement about her fly tying husband was, "Virtually everything he learns about technique he willingly shares as he tries to "pay back" those who shared with their techniques with him."

That is why Boyd won. A lot of people appreciated him. Since his death Boyd has been sincerely missed by all of us.