Richard Nelson of Los Gatos, California was presented with the Buz Buszek Memorial Fly Tying Award during the 1987 International FFF Conclave in West Yellowstone, Montana. Virginia Buszek Perry was there to make the presentation to Dick and it was a special personal moment for both of them. This was the 18th such presentation that's been made in Buz's name, honoring him and good fly tyers everywhere.

Richard is called Dick by many of his friends; some even call him Doc, because of his 30 year practice as an M.D. He retired in 1987.

Many people know Dick because of his presence at fly tying classes. And he's been attending national, regional and local FFF Conclaves since 1976 as a demonstration tyer.

But perhaps the one thing that most people associate with Dick Nelson is his Aztec fly, and all the variables it produced. It's hard to think about Dick Nelson without thinking about all those beautiful patterns using synthetic materials. Here's what Dick has to say about how many patterns followed his initial creation.

"After creating the Aztec in 1976, I have, with Doug Swisher's help (testing, suggestions and lots of encouragement), developed a large number of flies based on the Aztec tying technique of using acrylic knitting yarn in a new way. Among the flies are the Aztec, the Manata and the Dorado; also the Aztec Sculpin, Crayfish, Shrimp, Puffball, Squid, Leech, F-W, Salamander, Dragonfly Nymph, Damsel fly nymph, Frog, Ant, Cress Bug, Lady Bug, Stonefly Nymph, Rainbow Trout, Threadfin Shad, Black Nose Dace, Golden Shiner, Mickey Finn and many steelhead patterns. I also created the Nelson Deer Hair Caddis, the Nelson Green Rockworm and the Nelson Point Guard."

That's an impressive list, and anyone who doesn't know Dick would think he's bragging. But those people who know Dick well know that he's a very humble person, willing to serve without seeking the limelight. They say he's very outgoing and inquisitive. Dick likes to study the detail of a fly pattern and investigate its construction. At gatherings of fly tyers, he'll disappear for hours at a time and can be found intently watching a fellow tyer doing something a little new and different. Once he gets interested in a subject he studies it deeply. He collects stamps with the same intensity that he ties flies, and his concentration is legendary. A neighbor says he's often seen Dick leave his fly tying in the house to change the setting of the hose on the lawn, with his fly tying magnifying visor still on top of his head.

Dick wasn't always a fly tyer, or even a fly fisherman. He was born October 6, 1923 in Indianapolis, Indiana and raise in Detroit, Michigan. His initial contact with fishing was at a Boy Scout camp in Michigan (Camp Brady for those in the area). The target of those expeditions was bluegills and the bait was bait.

In 1968 Dick started fly fishing. He was living in Los Gatos, California and he learned from members of the fly fishing club in nearby San Jose, called Flycasters, Inc. He also read some fly fishing books. He started tying flies that same year, because he wanted to have some of the Swisher/Richards flies and some others that he couldn't buy. His initial instructors were club members Jess Ulloa, Ken Eugene and Rudy DeLuca. Dick also learned form Helen Shaw's book, Fly Tying. He served as president of Flycasters ,Inc., in 1974.

Dick has made donations of his flies everywhere he's tied or instructed, and that's a lot. That means he's supported conservation causes in several states and Canada. He also enjoys using his flies fly fishing. He has fished in Florida, Pennsylvania, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, California, and Alaska. He has enjoyed fishing with Charlie Brooks and Doug Swisher. He frequently fishes with his neighbor Wendell Huxtable, but his favorite and most frequent fishing companion is his wife Lillian. They've been married since 1949 and have five children.
Some of Dick's flies have been presented to the International Fly Fishing Center. He's served as an FFF Director at the local, regional and national level. He loves to teach fly tying and is very free with his time. In short, he's been a prototype Buszek Winner for years.