1989 - Jimmy Nix
by Dennis Bitton

The 20th Buz Buszek Memorial Fly Tying Award was presented to Jimmy Nix in August, 1989 at the 1989 FFF Conclave in West Yellowstone, Montana, by Virginia Buszek Perry. Jimmy was born March 13, 1939 in Chickasha, Oklahoma and lived there until he was 15. His father and a fishing partner taught Jimmy about fishing and his first fish were panfish. His father introduced him to fly tying and fly fishing.

It wasn't until he was out of college that he got serious about fly fishing and fly tying however. He says, "When my mother remarried when I was 15, we moved to Odessa, Texas. There is no water in Odessa, Texas. My fishing ended until college at the University of Houston Pharmacy School. I fished for redfish and specs (spotted sea trout) on the Texas coast with a spinning rod. I didn't know you could fish saltwater with a fly rod.

He learned however, and one of the chief instigators was his son, Murray. When Murray was about eight, and Jimmy 31, they attended a sports show together. Murray was fascinated watching a fly tyer and wanted to get a rod, go fishing, etc. The enthusiasm was contagious, and as Jimmy says, "Being born with a compulsive personality, I immersed myself in tying totally." A friend, and fellow Buszek winner, Billy Munn of Bridgeport, Texas, agrees with Jimmy's own assessment of himself.

"I think Jimmy is about as enthusiastic as anybody I've ever met," says Billy." "That goes for fishing and fly tying. He really goes after it, and he's a very good fly tyer."

Indeed, in the last 20 years Jimmy has done just about everything involving fly tying and fly fishing. He now makes his living tying, giving lectures, slide shows, teaching classes about tying and fishing, and writing freelance articles. He's produced a video called Fly Tying Bass Flies. There's another video about saltwater flies and plans for creating a book.

He has created fly patterns: Shineabou Shiner, Shineabou Shad, Feather Crab, Brown Shrimp, Bendback Frog and Bendback Snake. He's quick to emphasize that none are totally new inventions, but rather variations of existing patterns.

He's been active at FFF Conclaves locally, regionally, and nationally for years. His council has honored him in various ways, so have individual clubs. Now FFF and Jimmy's peers have honored him the best way they can. At the Awards Banquet in West Yellowstone, fellow tyers and FFF workers rose to their feet and gave Jimmy a standing ovation when his name was announced. None knew in advance that he was the winner. Full of emotion, Jimmy couldn't speak. A few close friends urged all to remember the event; it won't happen often. Since then he's said that he and the rest of the fly fishing world owe a debt of gratitude to his wife Glenda for giving him all the support he needed.

Lefty Kreh, a friend and advisor to Jimmy, had this to say about Jimmy: "One of the nicest things about Jimmy Nix is that he fits into that special category of tyers and fishermen who can share information when they teach, and not just display knowledge. It shows in the way he enjoys himself when he's teaching someone, and the way they enjoy him. I think he's one of our better teachers because of that."

Jimmy's service has now been properly recognized, as has that of 19 previous winners. But all of us should remember that there are hundreds of potential Buszek winners out there, and while not all will receive the award, all should. We're confident Jimmy will keep up the good work; he and many others hope the rest of you will too.