



First President of the Potomac Falconers Association

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An Ambassador for Falconry



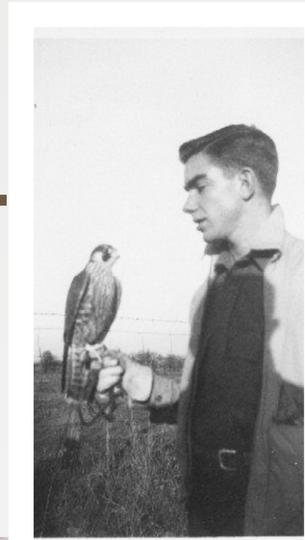
Steve Gatti was born in Washington, D.C. and lived in the area until late in life. He was a cherished father, husband and friend, and was sales manager in family-founded Atlantic Food Service for 38 years. He served honorably as a Lt. in the USMC during the Korean War, and was a lifelong outdoorsman, conservationist, fisherman and hunter. The passion of his life was falconry, ignited through boyhood reading. He recruited cousin Brian McDonald, two years his senior, and they embarked upon a lifelong obsession. At the age of 12 in 1942, Steve (with Brian) visited Alva (Al) Nye at his home and began a close friendship that would only end with Al's passing 50 years later. In 1944 at the age of 14, he and Brian took a Greyhound bus to Ocean City, Maryland. Walking the beach at Assateague Island, they captured their first peregrines. He flew tundra peregrines for many years, but in 1948 also took and flew one of the last eyes eastern anatum peregrines taken. That bird was from the Harper's Ferry eyrie, but Steve knew and visited many of the anatum eyries in their final years, banding one of the last known fledglings in 1951 at Mount Union (PA).

Steve took road trips west with Johnny McCabe and Sydney (Sig) Sigwald to meet Hal Webster, Doc Stabler and Luff Meredith. He flew tundra peregrines with close friends Sig, Johnny and Al, and later goshawks with Al, Brian, Jim Fox and Kent Carnie, among others. In 1961 Steve came together with other area notables to form the Potomac Falconers Association, and later served as its President. That year also marked the first trip of the local goshawk cadre to "Rabbit Island" in the Chesapeake Bay, where Steve's gos more than earned her keep. Steve also served American falconry well as a NAFA Director and Treasurer, and through Hawk Chalk and Journal articles. In later years he was a supporter of and volunteer at the Archives of Falconry. In 1963 Steve attended the international falconry meet in Austria, connecting with (among other luminaries) Count Umberto Caproni of Italy. This friendship paved the way for Steve and Al Nye to twice visit Scotland as Umberto's guests to hawk red grouse with their peregrines.

An ambassador for falconry as well as a practitioner, Steve testified before lawmakers and game officials, winning us allies through his knowledge, logic and affable nature. He, along with Al and Brian, met in D.C. with Prince Khalid of Saudi Arabia at the request of the U.S. State Department. In his later active falconry years Steve enjoyed the easy pace of hawking cottontails with Harris's hawks. On retiring to Connecticut he helped in the effort to legalize falconry in the state. When Steve burst on the scene American falconry was in its infancy. He grew with it, nurturing and helping to build the foundation upon which it has achieved such worldwide stature. Above all these accomplishments, he deserves to be remembered for his humanity. Those fortunate enough to know Steve could not have had a kinder, more thoughtful or better friend.

Photo left; Steve Gatti, Mt. Union, PA 5-10-1951

WHILE HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDED WORLDWIDE FALCONER, CHERISHED FATHER, HUSBAND AND FRIEND, HE DESERVES TO BE REMEMBERED FOR **HIS HUMANITY.**



PHOTOS

Upper right: Peters, Gatti, McDonald, Oct. 2001

Middle right: Steve in 1948 & 1964

Below: Al Nye and Steve Gatti Oct. 1964

