

The Charles S. Roberts Awards
1977 Hall of Fame winner
Redmond A. Simonsen
1942-2005 *Requiescat in pace* (may he rest in peace)

I was the first person hired by what came to be SPI, on 23 January 1970, over 35 years ago. When I left, nine years later, it was already in its graveyard spiral. In those nine years, I worked a lot with Redmond and saw him in good times and bad.

I can indeed confirm that I, along with the people I worked with, all respected and liked Redmond.

The reason for the respect is obvious. He was good, very good, at what he did. He took it seriously and you did not get in the way of Redmond doing his job. To the end of SPI, the standards of the graphics never faltered. He would never do anything less than first rate.

We liked him too, despite the fact that he was certainly the most mature person working with a collection of young, creative, eccentric, and sometimes crazy individuals. He was the one who had to hit the deadlines for the magazines and the games we produced. Even though he was under 30 when I started, he was the “old man”, an Air Force veteran, the voice of organization, intelligent and flexible systematization rather than creative anarchy, of doing the job well rather than confusing self-indulgence with self-expression.

Yet he was still one of us. What he did, we did. What he cared about, we cared about. I remember Redmond falling in love (unhappily) twice and sometimes, for all his intellect, being awkward rather than suave and sophisticated with women. I remember his obvious love and concern for his mother. I remember his discovery of photography, which became a real talent and passion. He played games because he enjoyed them, not because of his job.

He was a man of convictions and strong principles. He was normally quiet about them, however, unless provoked, either by a pompous pronouncement (something never rare at SPI) or something in print. He joked about his “Norwegian charisma” long before NPR picked up that theme. In many ways, he was a tremendously perceptive man, as I recall from hearing his views on movies (another Redmond interest) like *Star Wars* (failed the Redmond science fiction test) and *Breaker Morant* (good movie if questionable history).

He was a great autodidact. If something interested him, he would buy a pile of books on a subject, spend a weekend reading them all, and want to talk about it on Monday. He defined having the time and money to do that as one of the few luxuries he felt worth having. He enjoyed learning and, much as he enjoyed his dinners and talking with colleagues, he was happiest by himself and with a few close family and friends. Again, it was something that he shared with his colleagues.

In recent years, I heard from Redmond occasionally. But it was never to reminisce. It was always to ask a question or make a point. We may have joked about the old days as well as his Texas-sized cab fare bills, but he really never looked back. Similarly, while he loved New

York, once he had left I do not think he went back much. If we did not hear more from him, it was because he believed that you learned a lot more listening and looking than talking.

It is tragic that it took Redmond's too-young death to remind us of this complex man, friendly yet reserved, mature yet fun-loving, seeking learning and committed to doing his job well, who made an impact on us all, those many years ago. He will be missed.

– David C. Isby