

Jim Copsey



Hall of Fame

I have my father Hank Copsey, who was a 9 time All American trap shooter as well as a great pigeon shooter to thank for my trapshooting career. He gave me a life membership to the ATA in 1967. I'd say he got his moneys worth. I've shot over 332,000 registered targets since then, the vast majority since the year 2000. Hank put on a few shooting clinics in Texas in the 60's and I would tag along. I really learned a lot about shooting from him, observing his teachings...I learned from one of the best.

Where I really learned to shoot was when we lived at the Texas International Gun Club, now the National Shooting Complex in San Antonio. We lived in the house up on the hill overlooking the club. It was fabulous. I was setting targets, pulling or shooting most every day. That included box bird pigeons as well. Dad couldn't figure out what was happening to some of the pigeons he had in the bird pens, when in 1968 my practice shooting those pigeons paid off, I was 16 and ran 25 straight in box birds with 5 more in a shoot-off to win a very prestigious pigeon shoot and quite the payday, I think he figured out what was happening to those pigeons that day.

I won quite a few Junior trophies, but the big one was winning the preliminary handicap Junior trophy at the Grand in 1970. Dad had squadded me with Nadine

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Ljutic, which made it more special. That played a big part in making the Junior All American Trap Team in 1970.

We left Texas in 1970 and moved to Albuquerque where I started college. Skydiving, girls and flying, not necessarily in that order, became more of an interest for me so I took a hiatus until 2000 when I got the bug again to shoot. I broke out the old model 12 dad gave me and went to work. My first year back I broke a 99 in Sunday's handicap at our state shoot in New Mexico and tied Chris Betsworth for champion. He beat me in the shoot-off but I was hooked!

In 2002, I got my biggest thrill to date at the club my father built in San Antonio. It was the Texas State shoot, I squadded with Pat McCarthy, Leo Harrison, fellow United Airlines pilot Harold Nelms and club manager Mike Hampton. I broke my first 100 straight from the 27, it was the lone 100 and I won non-resident champion. That phone call to my dad was the most emotional and exciting call I ever made to him, I can still hear him whooping and cheering like it was yesterday. Breaking the 100 from the 27 at the club Hank had designed and managed was a real life event. A month later I ran 100 in the doubles and completed my Grand Slam, #303.

Over the years I've had a lot of success in winning non-resident champion trophies in Texas, Arizona and Colorado. As well as tying for champion at the Spring, Southern, Southwest and Autumn satellite grands. A few class trophies in doubles at the Grand, and in New Mexico I've managed to win the Championship Doubles, HOA and Handicap runner-up 3 times, maybe this year...

I made the Men's 1st State Team in New Mexico 14 years straight from 2000-2014, and believe me I'm in tough company with Cory, Britt and Cole Dalton, Jim Powers, Dennis Martinez (mister singles), Randy Chrobocinski and Mike Grady to name a few. New Mexico doesn't have the number of shooters a lot of similar sized states have but we have our share of good ones.

My dad was the best coach I ever had, Harlan is pretty good too. He keeps harping on me to press to the target and quit left arming it, he's right you know.

My international flying schedule gives me a lot of days off and therefore allows me to travel to a lot of shoots in our motor home. I will retire from United Airlines after 30+ years right after the Grand this year so I hope to make a few more. I have formulated some wonderful friendships all over the country at the shoots, at the bigger shoots you can find my best buddy Tim Robb and me giving it our best. Stop by our bus sometime, it's the one with the Jimmy Buffet music playing and maybe you will be lucky enough to get a bite of my beautiful wife Ethel's famous green chili chicken enchiladas and bring a ball to throw for Genny our happy lab that loves to fetch.

Cheers, Jim Copsey

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