

Nomination of Wayne T. Curtin for National Motorcycle Museum Hall of Fame

as submitted by Slider Gilmore

Wayne Curtin, MRF's Vice President of Government Relations and chief lobbyist in Washington, DC, was inducted into the National Motorcycle Museum Hall of Fame on August 7, 1996. While Wayne is an MRF employee, he is also a dedicated believer in motorcyclists' rights and a long-time member of the MRF Board of Directors. His experience and abilities are valuable assets that we may sometimes take for granted, but few of us know much of his background or why he is so effective. With appreciation, the text of this nomination is included in Volume 4 of the White Papers. Ed.

Wayne T. Curtin and Leadership

Wayne T. Curtin, age 40, has been a motorcyclist for 20 years. In 1983 he became active with Freedom Of Road Riders (FORR), the state motorcyclists' rights organization in Missouri. During that time he served as president of Local 4, chaired for five years one of the largest Toy Runs in Missouri, served on FORR's state central committee and as the organization's Vice Chairman. However, Wayne's greatest contribution to FORR was as a volunteer lobbyist, where he spent every day the Legislature was in session in Jefferson City from 1985 to 1988. He was also a founder and first chairman of FORR's political action committee, one of the first motorcyclists' PACs in the country.

In 1988, Wayne was hired as the first employee of the fledgling national motorcyclists' organization the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF). Never before had motorcyclists been represented in our nation's capital. At that time the MRF was financially supported by only a few state motorcyclists' rights organizations. Though the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) was supportive of the MRF there was tension as some saw the MRF as competition to AMA. Also, at that time relations with the third national motorcyclists organization, the National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM) was very strained, almost hostile.

Over the years Wayne worked to build support from all state motorcyclists' rights organizations, the AMA and NCOM for MRF's legislative agenda. In 1995, the AMA donated \$10,000 to support the work of the MRF. Additionally, AMA's

lobbyist in Washington worked to support the efforts of the MRF. Also in 1995, NCOM fully supported the MRF's legislative game plan by encouraging and helping to finance states to send delegations to Washington. All fifty states now financially support the MRF and actively work with the MRF on legislation in Washington. Thirty-seven states sent over 300 motorcyclists to Washington this year at Wayne's request. This fully cooperative agenda, made possible by Wayne's leadership, expertise in development of grass roots movements and his ability to work with varied groups and people, is one of the major reasons motorcyclists were able to repeal the federal helmet law in 1995.

In 1992, the AMA had the unfortunate experience of having to impeach one of their Trustees. The remaining 11 Trustees then had to select a new Trustee to represent the over 66,000 AMA members in the 13 states in the northeast region. Wayne was selected by the other Trustees to fill the remaining 3 years of the term of the impeached Trustee. Six of the AMA Trustees are normally elected, in three year cycles, by the general membership from six regions. Wayne decided for the health of the organization that he would serve as a caretaker of this position, but that when the next election came he would recruit and encourage other members to run. He felt that he may be seen as a "board selected" candidate and felt the membership should feel certain the process was open and fair.

The other strengths Wayne has brought as a leader in motorcycling are his skills as a lobbyist and political and legislative strategist. Wayne

provides the other members of the management committee of AMPAC with valuable insight into the positions and actions of representatives and senators on motorcycle issues. Wayne is consulted daily by motorcyclists when legislative problems come up in their states. He helps them develop a strategy for their state capitol. On many occasions, at the request of a state motorcyclists' rights organization, he has gone to state capitols to testify. One example of his lobbying skill providing leadership is the retroactive repeal of the federal penalties on states not having helmet laws.

The retroactive provision of the repeal, which Wayne suggested to conference committee staff, will return \$200 million to the control of the 25 states that did not pass helmet laws in 1994 and 1995. Motorcyclists in those 25 states will not only be able to tell legislators they have repealed the penalties, but that they are returning several million dollars the states had given up to defend freedom. This action will help secure freedom in those states for years to come.

Wayne is active in numerous community, church, business and political activities. In 1994 Wayne was elected as a Neighborhood Advisory Commissioner, a public office in the District of Columbia. This commission makes decisions on liquor licenses, zoning cases, public space use and planning and makes grants to community organizations. Wayne has served in several elective and appointed leadership positions in his church, St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Wayne has also organized activities to clean-up and fight crime in his community. In addition, he is active in developing leadership seminars for the American Society of Association Executives.

Prior to his career in government relations, Wayne was an engineer and training supervisor in the nuclear power industry. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

Wayne believes leadership involves invoking a vision of what can be and then acting decisively and with strength to bring that vision about. Providing people with inspiration, knowledge and a result that they can then move forward with is key to successful leadership. The product of knowledgeable and solid legislative information and strategy is what Wayne brought to the MRF.

When he arrived in Washington to work for the MRF he was the only employee and had less than \$40,000 a year in funding to start a national organization. The MRF now has a budget of over \$250,000 a year and three full-time employees. Unlike the early years, the MRF now enjoys the support of all national and state motorcyclists' rights organizations. The MRF has accomplished its number one legislative priority of repealing the federal helmet law. Wayne has been one of the key leaders in making the MRF successful and repeal of the federal helmet law a reality.