

# ROB RASOR: FREEDOM FIGHTER

*43 Years Of Service*

About 26 years ago, I met the AMA's then-Vice President for Government Relations, Rob Rasor. I had recently gone to work for the Motorcycle Industry Council as a government relations specialist focusing on land use issues and had travelled from the MIC's Washington, D.C.-area office to the AMA's offices which, at that time were in Westerville, Ohio, to meet with Rob and his staff to attempt to foster a better relationship between the two organizations.

I would have the opportunity to work with Rob and the AMA's government relations staff over the next several years. I was fortunate to have played a role in passing what was then called the National Recreational Trails Fund Act, now known as the Recreational Trails Program. Rob noticed the job I did on behalf of the off-highway-vehicle community for the MIC, and in 1994, as part of a departmental restructuring, Rob asked me to join the AMA's government relations staff as Washington representative.

Rasor had been working for the AMA for 17 years when I met him in 1990. He started his tenure as the AMA's government relations department was getting off the ground. The first time the AMA appeared before the U.S. Congress in Washington, it was Rob Rasor who delivered testimony to the House Surface Transportation Subcommittee on a highway bill. This was not only a milestone for the AMA, but for Rasor as well, as he explained in this space in a 2006 column. He said he was so nervous, he spent hours standing on a hotel balcony rehearsing his remarks.

Rob was at the forefront of many of the AMA's legislative and administrative battles, including fighting the California Desert Protection Act and many other public lands access restrictions; the sportbike ban in the late 1980s; bike bans in St. Louis, Springfield, Ill., Brockton, Mass., Chicago and other communities around the country; health insurance discrimination; and federal blackmail of states over the issue of helmet laws, just to name a few.

Rob Rasor was named president of the AMA in 2000 and served in that capacity until I arrived at the end of 2006. He served at a difficult period of transition for the organization. His predecessor served for only a year after succeeding a very long-term chief executive. The association had just moved to its current headquarters location and had just opened the greatly expanded museum. The association's for-profit professional racing subsidiary was operating largely independent of the AMA with its own board of directors and chief executive, a fact that is widely misunderstood. Rasor had little to no

authority over the entity, but seemingly had all of the accountability. It is my considered opinion that Rasor's efforts were undermined by various members of the Board of Directors and less than optimal support from his executive staff, making it difficult for him to be as successful as he could have been.

Although Rasor retired in 2006 from his role as president, he stayed on as director of international affairs. This month, he completes his third term as an elected member of the Board of Directors of the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme. Prior to being elected to the FIM Board, Rob headed the FIM's Public Affairs Commission. From that post, he provided international leadership regarding the protection of motorcyclists' rights around the globe.

I had the opportunity to serve alongside Rob on the FIM Board during my term as president of FIM North America. It was immediately evident to me that the FIM leadership relied heavily on Rob's expertise. While he functioned as our eyes and ears at the FIM, Rob served that organization with distinction, as well, serving a term as a vice president, as well as chair of the strategic planning and governance committees.

Rasor currently serves as chair of the Leadership and Motorcyclists' Rights Advocates Committee, a committee of the American Motorcycle Heritage Foundation tasked with reviewing candidates for the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame from the rights and advocacy category. He is also a former chairman and currently serves as a member of the Board of AMPAC, AMA's political action committee. I hope that he will continue his work on both of these important panels.

I have enjoyed working with Rob and have learned a great deal from him over the years. I have appreciated his leadership and his mentorship, but most of all, his friendship. Rob is one of the original freedom fighters at the AMA, and there is no doubt that the state of motorcycling in America is better due to his efforts over his 43-year tenure at the AMA. On behalf of the AMA membership, thank you Rob Rasor for your service to motorcycling and to the AMA. Enjoy your retirement. You've earned it!

*Rob Dingman is AMA president and CEO.*

► *Rob Rasor in the 1970s.*



By Rob Dingman

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