

MEETING MALCOLM

By Rob Dingman



The first time I met Malcolm Smith was in the early 1990s at the annual motorcycle industry trade show that used to be held every February in Cincinnati, Ohio. I was relatively new to the industry at the time, working as a government relations specialist focusing on land use issues for the Motorcycle Industry Council, and I was there to work the MIC booth.

As with most trade shows, all attendees had name tags, primarily to let everyone know who they were dealing with, as attendees were a mix of aftermarket vendors, allied trade companies, powersports dealers and media.

Malcolm's nametag was a bit different, though, and it stuck out to me. While the tags of most attendees identified their name, organizational affiliation and location of residence, the only identifier on Malcolm's name tag in addition to his name was a single word: motorcyclist.

And that was totally appropriate, given how much Malcolm had done in and for the motorcycle industry.

Malcolm has not let his notoriety go to waste, and has used it to further motorcycling at every turn. One of the best examples was when the government imposed a ban on the sale of youth-model motorcycles and ATVs in 2009 due to the lead content in items such as frame paint— as if kids would be chewing on their frames. Malcolm sold bikes in defiance of the ban at his Riverside, Calif., dealership. It was risky, as he could have been fined (or worse), but his action turned the tide and aided in getting the ban repealed, saving the potential loss of a generation of motorcyclists.

He's also supremely gracious. At a AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days event several years ago where he was Grand Marshal, he signed autographs for far longer than the scheduled time. As long as someone was in line, he signed. He's that sort of guy.

Malcolm is best known, of course, for his starring role in the 1971 moto-documentary *On Any Sunday*, which celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year. Malcolm and OAS introduced an entire generation to the world of motorcycling, and literally thousands upon thousands of motorcyclists credit Malcolm and that movie with getting them interested in motorcycling.

On Any Sunday's great appeal is its showcasing of people we can all relate to as they enjoy motorcycling in virtually all of its forms. And that is what we hope to achieve through the pages of *American Motorcyclist* magazine, as well. We endeavor to shine the spotlight on the many faces and stories of motorcyclists who make up the membership of the American Motorcyclist Association — and beyond.

To amplify this effort we've brought new talent to the editorial side of the magazine. Longtime motorsports journalist and motorcycle industry veteran Mitch Boehm has been named Editorial Director of the magazine (and website), and he is supported by new Managing Editor Joy Burgess.

American Motorcyclist is the journal of the American Motorcyclist Association. The AMA is about *the people* of motorcycling, so it's only fitting that our flagship publication focuses on telling their stories in a compelling way.

With this issue we are rededicating the focus of the magazine to telling wonderful stories about the people of motorcycling. So it seemed only fitting to begin this refresh with a feature story about Malcolm Smith as he celebrates his 80th birthday.

Thank you, Malcolm, for all you have done for motorcycling, and Happy Birthday!

Rob Dingman, a Charter Life Member, is president and CEO of the AMA.

“Malcolm has not let his notoriety go to waste, and has used it to further motorcycling at every turn.”