



A TRIBUTE TO *W Russell Rylko*

05/18/1948 – 05/09/2013



On Thursday May 9th 2013, at 5:20pm our founding President Russ Rylko died peacefully in his sleep. Russ had been battling brain

cancer for the past 10 months and had endured much.

The Directors of Mystic Valley Railway Society are dedicating this page to Russ and the wonderful legacy he has left us.

On June 27th 1970 Russ Rylko and a few friends started Mystic Valley Railway Society so that they could help inform and educate the members and friends about transportation with a special emphasis on trains. With the help of the Directors and Volunteers, Russ was able to share his incredible knowledge of transportation and New England by organizing special trains to Cape Cod, New Hampshire, Maine & Vermont. He even organized several special trains to Montreal, Canada. Wherever he went he made many friends.

As the membership numbers

grew so did the destinations. People enjoyed Vacations all over the USA, using trains, boats and buses to see some of the most beautiful sights that our country has to offer. From New Orleans to the Rocky Mountains and from Amish Country to the East Coast cities Russ has guided MVRS on an amazing journey. From 1982 until 2007 we ran our signature 34th Street Express to New York City, it was an amazing sight to see a special train packed full of MVRS members, their friends and all the crew descending on the BIG APPLE and enjoying all the sights and sound that make New York Special.

Russ always enjoyed Train Shows so it was no surprise when in 1979 Rail-A-Rama came into being, so from then until 2010 Mystic Valley Railway Society hosted one of the most popular train shows in the North East. Russ also had transformed his basement at home into a miniature world of trains and landscapes, the train layout he had was an impressive sight, it covers all types of trains from

the beautiful steam trains of old to the modern workhorses of today, passenger cars, freight containers, Station buildings and townscapes, it has it all.

On a cold and snowy January back in 1974 Russ was working on the Snowflake Special to Gardner, when he was looking for volunteers to help shovel snow, a young woman offered her help, her name was Tracey. Russ and Tracey became friends and as we all know Tracey became his wife and lifelong friend. He had proposed to her on Block Island in the July of 1977 and they were married on November 27 1977. Russ had arranged to bus their entire wedding guest from the reception to Rte 128 RR station to send him and his beautiful Bride off by train for their honeymoon.

Russ always took great pride in sharing his love of trains and the country he loved and as a teacher he had a special way with children, making sure they got as much out of the trip as they could. It was always a pleasure to watch Russ share his knowledge with the younger mem-

bers and the not so young members when we undertook our annual visit to Washington D.C. The little snippets of information he shared always made it very special. One of the most enjoyed trips he was able to arrange was a special trip to the North Pole and a visit with Santa.

There have been many Directors and members over the 43 years and each and every one of them has helped to make MVRS what it is today. The current Directors are doing everything in their power to continue with the legacy that Russ has left for us, and with your help we will succeed.

So the next time you hear the whistle from a train checkout the caboose you never know you might just see a man in a red blazer wearing his engineer's hat and a wicked smile as he continues on his Mystic Valley Adventure....

It was a pleasure to have known you Russ..

