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Frederick Emmart "Ted" Hood

May 5, 1927 - June 28, 2013
Birthplace: Beverly, Massachusetts

"When I was young, I thought if I can be a sail maker, make $12,000 a year, sail and work on boat

For nearly 20 years, Ted Hood was the dominant force in sailing. The quiet man from Marblehead, Massachusetts, did it all. He wove the synthetic cloth, made the sails, innovated gear and systems, designed and built the boats, and steered them to a lion's share of victories.

He was the first to weave Dacron to his own specifications. He innovated the grooved "foil" head stay, the dip-pole jibe, roller furling, and the Stoway mast. Hood Sails was, for a time, the world's largest sail maker. As rival North Sails' CEO Tom Whidden once said, "You could not teach a sail maker to see what Ted Hood saw."

Hood also “saw” hull shapes and appendages. The series of boats named Robin that Hood designed and raced beginning in the late 1960s were as well-known for their unusual keels (and centerboards) and retractable rudders as for their string of victories. With Hood at the wheel, his Robins won Newport-Bermuda, Marblehead-Halifax, and the Southern Circuit, among others.

Hood sailed the 12-meter *Courageous* that Olin Stephens designed for the 1974 America’s Cup. He made the sails for the boat, then as a last minute replacement helmsman, steered it to a 4-0 sweep of Australia’s *Southern Cross*. Hood designed two 12-meters of his own, *Nefertiti* and *Independence*, in addition to 1,600 other designs. Hood is responsible for more than 6,000 boats that are still sailing.

Among Hood’s best known boats is *American Promise*, the 60-footer he designed and built for the late Dodge Morgan’s 150-day, 27,000-mile solo circumnavigation in 1985-86. Morgan said he needed three things to succeed: an iron will, luck, and a great boat. “And this,” Morgan said at voyage end, “is a great boat.”

- Roger Vaughan

Links of Interest:

"His Genius Lives on in His Designs" - article by Jim Flannery in Trade Online, August 2013

"A Skipper From Scratch" - Mar. 27 1961 Sports Illustrated article

"Sailing To Victory With A Needle And Thread" - Feb. 10, 1964 Sports Illustrated article

Biographical profile with photos on tedhood.com

Sailboat designs of Ted Hood - on sailboatdata.com

Wikipedia page for Ted Hood

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