

## ATA News Release

### JERRY HUSAK (1932 – 2018)

Jerome D. Husak, visionary founder of the American Topical Association (ATA), the second largest philatelic organization in the US, died on February 22. He was 86.

Jerry was a teenager in Milwaukee in 1949 when he envisioned a society for topical collectors. He later wrote, “There must be others like myself. Why don’t we get together and share our information through a united body of topical collectors?” Thus, the ATA was born. “Who knows,” Jerry thought, “perhaps as many as 200 topical collectors might come together.” Within five months of its founding, the ATA had 408 members. In its 68 years, it has had close to 60,000 members from more than 100 countries. It is the largest topical/thematic association in the world.

In his history of the ATA, Jerry wrote “The early days were not easy. Many people had to be convinced that topicals deserve a place in philately.” When the ATA affiliated with the American Philatelic Society in 1987, it became its largest affiliate. The Thematic Award at APS StampShow is named for Jerry.

Jerry was ATA member #1 and the first recipient of the ATA’s Distinguished Topical Philatelist award.

He worked full time for the ATA, as editor of its journal, *Topical Time*, until 1977, and as executive secretary until 1984. When Jerry retired from the association’s Board of Directors in 2008, he was awarded the honorary title of director emeritus. In 2012 the ATA Board designated May 25 as an “annual National Topical Stamp Collecting Day, promoting topical stamp collecting as a vital dimension of the future of philately and honoring topical philately visionary and ATA founder Jerry Husak on his birthday.”

Jerry died in Sun City West, Arizona, where he lived since moving there from Milwaukee in 1984. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Sally, who was a tremendous support in his ATA endeavors.

Contributions in memory of Jerry Husak may be made to the ATA.

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