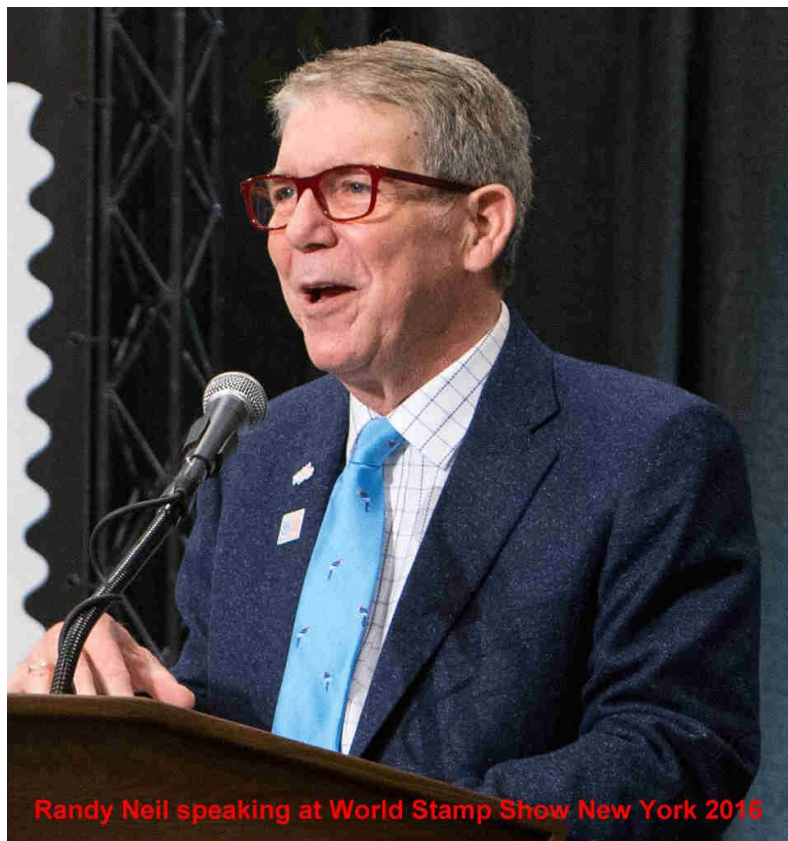




Civil War PHILATELIC SOCIETY
FOUNDED 1935

E-Newsletter, March 2024

Passing of Randy Neil



**Randolph (Randy) Laning Neil
(December 16, 1941 - March 6, 2024)**

The Civil War Philatelic Society is sad to convey the news of the passing of Randy Neil. Randy joined our Society in 1970 and was 19th on our list of longest standing members.

Randy Neil's philatelic influence comes with an impossibly-long list of accomplishments. He lived for philately, to the benefit of all collectors. His passing sent shockwaves through the world-wide philatelic community. Philately lost a beloved icon whose impact on our hobby has been – and will continue to be – enormous.

Joining in 1970, Randy became Confederate Stamp Alliance (CSA) member 1506. He served as editor of the *Confederate Philatelist* 2008-2013 and helped with many CSA promotional tasks, such as designing book covers for society publications. He loved the society and was always eager to help when and where he could. His gift to 75th anniversary convention attendees was a photo biography of the society and society luminaries of old.

His Confederate collecting, writing, and exhibiting centered around the 10¢ Steel Plate Issues of 1863-65. He won the coveted CSA Trophy in 2010 at the 75th anniversary convention in Richmond, held in conjunction with the American Philatelic Society (APS). As presiding president, I had the pleasure of presenting him with that award. He was visibly ecstatic.

A lifelong native of Kansas City, Randy was only 14 years old when he took a train to New York City for FIPEX (1956), an exciting international show for a precocious young boy. At FIPEX, he entered his first exhibit, a one-page display of the 7¢ 1954 Liberty series. He was also persuaded to begin writing a column for junior collectors in the then-popular *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*, as well as a column for *First Days*. He was hooked on the hobby for life.

During those teen years, he met brothers John (Confederates) and Bob Kaufmann (Carriers and Locals) in New Jersey, along with their airpost-collecting father, Bill Kaufmann. I did not meet him until 1970 when Randy attended a regional society meeting at my home in Alexandria, Va.

Randy attended journalism school at the University of Kansas as an advertising/radio and television major. He spent decades helping stamp dealers with their marketing promotions, as well as beginning new organizations and publications. He traded as Neil Media, Inc., creating and maintaining philatelic websites as well as print newsletters and ads, including mine. He traded as Neil Print Media in more recent years, foregoing the demanding online work.

Called a “cheerleader for the hobby” by many, some do not realize how that fitting moniker came about. In 1963, he joined the organization of the new Kansas City Chiefs and began their cheerleading program. He wrote the *New York Times* bestseller *The Official Cheerleaders Handbook* (1979). With a mischievous grin, he once shared with me that a young cheerleader by the name of Paula Abdul (singer, dancer, choreographer, TV personality) once sat on his lap to pose for a photo. Randy was thrilled with the recent Super Bowl wins by the Chiefs. He was texting me during the 2023 game, euphoric over the win.

Randy co-founded the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors (AAPE) in 1986, spearheading efforts to revolutionize the field of exhibiting in the United States and essentially inventing the idea of the international single-frame exhibit. He served as AAPE president and editor of the *Philatelic Exhibitor*. In 1987, he wrote and published the seminal *Philatelic Exhibitors Handbook*.

He ably demonstrated that serious philatelic research and exhibiting could be done on a budget. He won Grand Awards in national competitions for both stamp and literature exhibits.

The APS benefited from his leadership as president 1993-1997, following the term of his good friend, John Hotchner.

Philatelic literature was advanced by his founding and editing two of the leading philatelic publications today, *American Stamp Collector and Dealer* (2007) and *Kelleher's Stamp Collectors Quarterly* (2015). Randy told me that people want to read about people and encouraged his columnists to write toward that end, with a heavy dose of history coexisting with the postal history. His professional layouts were defined by slick colorful pages. He brought philatelic media into the modern era.

Randy's writing has appeared in numerous journals over the years, including the *American Philatelist*, for which he wrote a column on exhibiting for a decade, *Stamp Collector*, and *Linn's Stamp News*. In addition to his book on exhibiting, he also co-authored, with Jack Rosenthal, the *United States Trans-Mississippi Issue of 1898*. In 1992, he also founded *U.S. Stamps & Postal History*, which continues today as *U.S. Stamp News*, published by John Dunn.

In 2021, he was invited to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists, a philatelic award of international scale for those who have distinguished themselves by outstanding service to philately; it was created by the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain in 1921. Regrettably, Randy never got a chance to physically sign the scroll. He was also awarded the Lichtenstein Award by the Collectors Club of New York in 2023, and was to accept it in May 2024 at the opening of the new home of the Collectors Club. His daughter, Merritt, plans to accept it on his behalf.

It would be excess to list all of his many awards, but worth mentioning are the APS Luff Award (2000) for outstanding service to the society, and the Charles J. Peterson Philatelic Literature Life Achievement Award (2017), awarded by the American Philatelic Research Library. He was also inducted into the APS Writers' Unit Hall of Fame and recognized as a U.S. Philatelic Classics Society Distinguished Philatelist.

Randy Neil left an enviable legacy, an inspiration for future generations of collectors. Philately will miss his work product and enthusiasm. Those of us fortunate enough to know him personally will deeply miss him.

Trish Kaufmann