

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 11, 2025**

**Southeast Federation of Stamp Clubs Announces  
2026 Rowland Hill Award Honoree**

The Board of Directors of the Southeast Federation of Stamp Clubs is pleased to announce the winner of the Rowland Hill Award for 2026. The Rowland Hill award, named after the inventor of the first postage stamp, is a lifetime achievement award bestowed annually to a member of the Southeastern philatelic community who has made an outstanding lifetime contribution to philately.

For 2026, the Board proudly honors **Raymond J. Pietruszka** of Madison, Alabama.

Ray has collected stamps since he was a child but became re-engaged with the hobby in the early 1980s. Ray's primary interest and research area is Russian Stamps and Postal History. He has assembled a strong collection in this area and began exhibiting his material in 1987.

Since then, Ray has won many national-level awards for his exhibits. Of particular note are his exhibits *Type 1 St. Petersburg Surcharges*, *the Romanov Jubilee Issue 1913*, and *RSFSR 1917-1923*, with each of these exhibits winning gold at national shows. More recently, Ray has tackled the very challenging area of modern Russian philately, with his popular *The Disunion of the Soviet Union* also receiving gold at the national level and his one frame exhibit, *Use of the 1992 St. Petersburg Local Stamps* which won an international Vermeil medal.

Ray's exhibiting achievements are rivalled by his philatelic writing, where Ray has authored twelve articles for the Rossica Society's Journal and the Polonus Society's Journal.

In 2016, Ray completed the American Philatelic Society's Philatelic Judging apprenticeship and became a fully accredited Philatelic Judge. Today, Ray typically judges three to four times a year.

Ray has also taken leadership positions in organized philately. He has served as the President of the Rossica Society since 2013 and is a past-Executive Vice-president of the Polonus Society.

Despite these national recognitions, Ray is active at the local level as well, supporting the Huntsville Philatelic Club in a variety of roles, including service as President from 2013-2015, Vice President 2023-2024, and the Exhibits Chair of HUNTSPEX for several years.

"Ray is a key contributor to our hobby here in the Southeast," said Charles O'Brien, President of the SEFSC. "I'm delighted to learn that his contributions at the local, regional and national level are being recognized with the with the 2026 Rowland Hill Award."

Ray currently resides in Madison, Alabama. He will be honored as the 2026 Rowland Hill Award recipient at the Awards Banquet of the Southeastern Stamp Expo on January 24th, 2026.