Dave Whitlock was awarded the third Wayne "Buz" Buszek Award in 1972. Dave's contributions to the fly fishing industry, and fly tying in particular, have been phenomenal.

Dave developed several completely new fly patterns, occasionally using new materials in the process. He's also responsible for enough variations on patterns to qualify as one of the most innovative tiers around. Listing patterns he's named would take pages. Suffice it to say that Dave qualified in every way as a Buszek winner.

There are lots of articles and books that talk about Dave's experiences, exploits and talents. Since we're limited in space, we thought we'd tell you a few things you may not have read elsewhere.

He was born November 11, 1934, in Muskogee, Oklahoma. His parents named him David William and he started fly fishing in the streams and ponds of northeastern Oklahoma at about age 9. His first efforts were with a cane pole for bass, panfish, catfish and trout. That last species started a love affair that's still going on. Dave's famous Whitlock Vibert Box is still widely used; it is a device for introducing or reintroducing trout to meritorious streams. There has been many an article about his success on the White River in Arkansas.

Dave says he was tying his own flies at age 12, largely to support his own growing interest in the activity. He remained self-taught until age 18, when he met with other tiers. During those years, he says his only "instruction" came from standing around Dan Bailey's shop in Livingston, Montana,, watching the tiers. He intimates, without really saying so, that he might have hung around long enough to make a few tiers nervous.

He's more than made up for it. Dave was instrumental in seeing to it that fly tying activities were a big part of FFF Conlcaves. He discovered excellent tiers here and there and made sure they were given the publicity their talent deserved.

His occupation, up to the early 70's, when he started making his living off of fishing related activities, was that of a petroleum geologist. He lived in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

Dave is also an accomplished artist and photographer. He's made a name for himself in those fields equal to his stature in the fly tying world.

He says of the award: "As I see it, it's the top honor today for commercial or amateur fly tiers to achieve. It gives us a stage to identify and recognize our sport's artistic talents and achievements. Buz was a special man to me, the first really innovative, open-minded, tireless man of fly tying I'd ever met. In many ways, we can just carry on where Buz headed us--A better enrichment of our sport of fly fishing through fly tying."

There are probably plenty of fly tiers who could say similar things of Dave.