



## American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association

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### **ASLRRRA Announces 2023 Short Line Hall of Fame Inductees**

**WASHINGTON, March 7, 2023** – Four new members have been selected by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association to join the [Short Line Railroad Industry Hall of Fame](#). Pete Claussen, Bruce Flohr, Edward Lewis and Richard Robey will be inducted at the 2023 ASLRRRA Annual Conference and Exhibition in New Orleans on April 3, 2023. Lewis, who passed away in 2015, will be honored posthumously.

The Short Line Hall of Fame recognizes short line railroad visionaries who through their dedication, commitment, and achievement best exemplify the qualities of innovation, entrepreneurialism, perseverance, and service that have advanced the short line railroad industry. The 2023 Class is the third to be inducted.

“Our industry stands on the shoulders of individuals who took great risks and tackled great obstacles with grit and determination. These individuals have each added their own chapter to the all-American short line railroading story. We are grateful for the leadership of those that

have come before us, and inspired by their achievements,” said Chuck Baker, President of ASLRRRA. “This year’s cohort – Pete Claussen, Bruce Flohr, Ed Lewis and Richard Robey – each took small companies that they started or joined early and brought them to the pinnacle of industry leadership, providing a playbook for many other short liners to emulate. It will be an honor to recognize these exceptional entrepreneurs for their career-spanning short line industry contributions in April.”

**Herman Peter “Pete” Claussen, II** ([read more](#))

Pete Claussen learned to love railroads thanks to his German grandfather, who couldn’t speak English but who connected with his young grandson by taking him to a park near their New Jersey home to watch for trains that passed on adjacent tracks.

His first career as a lawyer laid the groundwork for a successful career in railroading. His experiences at the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Knoxville International Energy Expo, which organized the 1982 World’s Fair, provided connections leading to a role as President of the South Central Tennessee Railway, in 1983.

The passage of the Staggers Rail Act in 1980 allowed enterprising individuals to purchase small railroads from bigger companies and Claussen decided he wanted to take a similar chance. He founded Gulf & Ohio Railways Inc. (G&O) and on Dec. 31, 1985 Claussen’s first railroad, one of more than 18 that he would purchase, the Mississippi Delta, ran its first train.

Today, G&O, of which Claussen is chair, operates four short line freight railroads in Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina and one tourist excursion operation in Tennessee. The company also owns Knoxville Locomotive Works, a locomotive remanufacturing company that is making a name for itself developing environmentally friendly low-emission locomotive engines.

Over the years Claussen's passion for trains has converged with his interest in studying history and preserving historical artifacts. From finding and restoring locomotives, to being active in preservation of culture, animal habitats and parkland, Claussen has preserved history for the next generations.

Visitors to Washington, D.C. can visit the Linda and Pete Claussen Hall of Democracy in the National Museum of American History, or the National Museum of African American History and Culture where they will see another of Claussen's contributions, a Jim Crow-era segregated railroad car that serves as one of the featured items in the museum's Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom exhibition.

He has been chair of ASLRRA's Legislative Policy Committee and served on the Association's board and Executive Committee.

**Bruce M. Flohr** ([read more](#))

From his start as a trainee to work in the federal regulatory arena and eventual ownership of a short line holding company, Bruce Flohr has viewed the railroad industry from many angles.

The Stanford University graduate and former U.S. Army officer got his start in the railroad industry in 1965 as a brakeman and management trainee with the Southern Pacific Railroad, rising through the ranks at the company, finally being named division superintendent of the company's San Antonio Division in 1971.

Following several years in government, including acting administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration in 1977, Flohr started his own company, RailTex, Inc.

From a “headquarters” room in Flohr’s San Antonio, Texas home, the rail leasing company rented open-top hopper cars to quarry operators moving rock for construction projects. By 1989 the company had a fleet of 630 rail cars.

In 1982, with a recession driving down demand for construction materials like the rock shipped in RailTex hopper cars, Flohr and his team needed other business opportunities. In 1984 Flohr acquired the San Diego and Imperial Valley Railroad, increasing rail traffic from 1,600 rail cars annually to 6,000 just three years later. By the time RailTex was sold in 2000 to RailAmerica, revenues were \$176 million and its assets valued at \$368 million. RailTex had acquired 34 separate lines and operated them as 23 different short line railroads, the largest short line holding company in North America at that time.

Flohr served on the Association of American Railroads Executive Committee for six years and as chair of the Regional Railroads of America, prior to the latter organization’s merger with the American Short Line Railroad Association to become ASLRRRA.

Outside of railroads Flohr is active in many community organizations, and has established the Flohr Family Foundation, which has donated over \$3 million to different groups.

In his eighties now, Flohr still works to share his lifetime of knowledge with the next generation, recently adding “published author” to his long and storied resume. Flohr’s book, a “mini-MBA program” titled *Staying on Track*, came out in January 2022.

### **Edward “Ed” Lewis** ([read more](#))

Like many lifelong railroaders, Ed Lewis’s love affair with trains and railroads began when he was a child. Growing up in Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey, he would explore, often by bicycle, rail lines and stations in his home state and in New York.

Lewis began his career in the railroad industry in 1963 at the Long Island Rail Road, where he served as a clerk. He was assistant to the president and general manager of the Arcade and Attica Railroad in New York; auditor of freight revenue at the Providence & Worcester Railroad in Rhode Island; vice president of the Strasburg Rail Road in Pennsylvania; and secretary-treasurer and general manager of the Lamoille Valley Railroad Company in Vermont.

In 1987, Lewis was the first company outsider to be hired as president of the Aberdeen and Rockfish Railroad (A&R) in North Carolina. He held that position for 20 years until 2007. In a 2017 article about the A&R in the *News & Observer*, Lewis was credited with bringing about much of the railroad's most recent successes.

Lewis's interest in railroads extended beyond his work managing them. He wrote several books about railroads that often featured photographs he took himself. In 1971, he published his first book, the *Wellsville, Addison and Galetton Railroad: Sole Leather Line* which told the history of the WAG, as the railroad was affectionately known.

Lewis's most famous book remains his *American Shortline Railway Guide*, a directory of small railroads, featuring "facts, figures, and detailed locomotive rosters" of hundreds of U.S. short lines. Copies of Lewis's railway guide can still be found in ASLRRRA's Washington, D.C. office and the Association has called this book the original gold standard of statistical and historical information for short lines.

Lewis, remembered by many as "Mr. Short Line," was an avid collector of railroad ephemera, including historic railroad passes, timetables, maps, and tickets. At one time, he maintained arguably the most comprehensive collection of railroad timetables and historic stock certificates in North America.

Ed Lewis passed away on Nov. 11, 2015, after battling Parkinson's disease.

**Richard Robey** ([read more](#))

Richard Robey, a native of Cranford, New Jersey, began his railroading career in 1964 with a college summer job at the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad.

Robey joined the C&O's Railroad Management Training Program in 1966 after graduating from Columbia University with an M.B.A. and later managed sales for the Illinois Central Railroad in Chicago. In 1976, four years before the Staggers Rail Act would bolster the development of the short line freight rail industry, Robey and three partners started their own small railroad. The group bought the Octoraro Railway for \$50,000, a deal that included two 30-year-old diesel locomotives and a dilapidated depot.

In 1979 Robey joined the Southern Pacific Railroad and assisted in setting up its marketing department in San Francisco. In 1980 he joined US Rail, a car leasing company also based in San Francisco. The following year he returned to Pennsylvania, joining the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad (P&LE) and was involved, among many other things, in selling a fleet of P&LE coal hoppers to China Rail.

When companies like Conrail were looking to divest some of their smaller lines in the early 1980s, the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority (JRA), an eight-county joint municipal authority, formed to preserve Pennsylvania lines and the area's freight service. In 1984, following a competitive bidding process, Robey and his wife Miriam founded the North Shore (NSHR) and Nittany & Bald Eagle Railroads (NBER) in Northumberland, Pennsylvania to operate the local branch lines saved from abandonment by the JRA. The result was a public-private partnership between JRA and NSHR that exists to this day.

Under Robey's leadership, rail traffic grew from just a handful of cars that first year to between 20,000 to 30,000 carloads annually today. Robey retired in 2010, after selling the railroad to the North Shore Railroad management team.

Robey served two terms on ASLRRA's Board of Directors. He was also one of the founders of the Keystone State Railroad Association and served on the AASHTO Standing Committee on Rail Transportation (SCORT). He now serves on the Northumberland County (PA) Industrial Development Authority.

For more information on the Short Line Hall of Fame 2023 inductees, visit our [website](#).

**About ASLRRA** - The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) is a non-profit trade association representing the interests of the nation's 603 short line and regional railroads (Class II and III railroads) and railroad supply company members in legislative and regulatory matters. Short lines operate 47,500 miles of track in 49 states, or approximately 29% of the national railroad network, touching in origination or termination one out of every five cars moving on the national railroad system, serving customers who otherwise would be cut off from the national railroad network, particularly in rural and small-town America. Categorized as small businesses, short lines transport all commodities, with the agriculture, energy and manufacturing sectors being particularly reliant on short line service.

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