

# FLY FISHERMAN NEWCASTS

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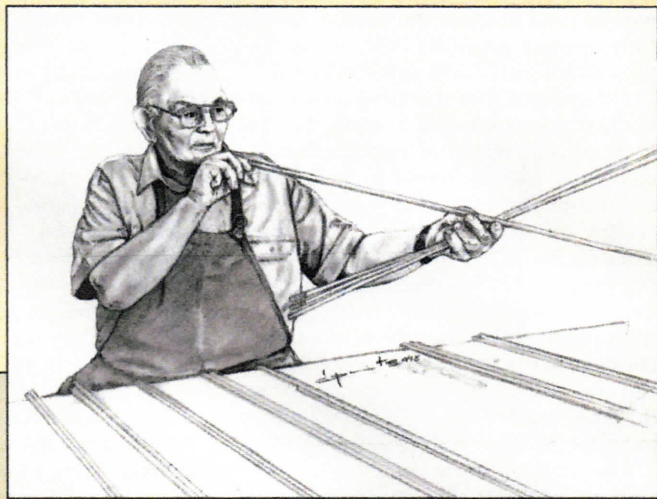
## WALT POWELL (1915-2001)

### *Bamboo rod legend leaves legacy*

**M**ASTER FLY-ROD MAKER Walton Powell died at the age of 85 on June 29 at Fall River Mills, California. He was the son and apprentice of E. C. Powell, whose patented semi-hollow construction produced bamboo rods of exceptional performance, beauty, and power. Walton so improved and perfected E. C.'s methods and machinery that he made them his own as he added to them.

His best bamboo rods are in a class by themselves.

Powell was an iconoclast and a maverick. He had the probing mind of a research scientist and the temperament of an artisan. He was a theorist, an engineer, and ultimately a pragmatist who took nothing at face value. Those characteristics were the well-spring of an innovative genius that had a lasting influence on the tackle that fly anglers fish



*Bamboo-rod maker Walton Powell also contributed to significant developments in glass, graphite, and boron rod construction.*

with today. His friend, Alaskan and Chilean lodge operator Jim Repine, put it best: "... his immense contribution to the development of the fly rod went way beyond that of most of his fabled predecessors (Payne, Leonard, Jordan and others) in that his allotted time here carried him through the development of glass, graphite, and boron. And his pioneering contribution in the 'new' materials was just as

impressive as his work with cane."

Stories of his cantankerous nature are legion. But behind the gruff exterior, those who knew him best found a complex, extraordinary, deeply loyal and compassionate friend with a wonderful sense of humor. The angling world is much the richer for his having been here—and noticeably smaller with his passing.

CHUCK STRANAHAN

