

01-1979 [D-8751] Applied Concepts - 10 Foot Boris

This huge fully functional Boris chess computer of 10-foot-tall was on display at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago in January 1979. Steve Blincoe, the American collector and moderator of the HIARCS chess forum, says that this Boris must be the largest chess computer ever built. But I think that the Fidelity Park-Schach 4000 is still a bit bigger. It doesn't matter that much, because it will be clear to everyone that this gigantic Boris must have made a big impression on the visitors at the CES. The photo came online via Robert Chafitz who was present for the first time on the HIARCS forum on March 30, 2008. Robert is the son of Steve and Arleen Chafitz, the founders of Chafitz Inc. from Rockville, Maryland. Through Robert we learned, among other things, that David Lindsey is Boris' programmer.



10 Foot Boris: Steve and Arleen Chafitz are standing in front of it.

(Photo: Robert Chafitz)

What else did we hear from Robert Chafitz...

...Having grown up with Boris, the Modular Game Systems, ARB, and the Diplomat, I remember the machines quite well (as a young boy, I even modeled with Boris in magazine ads. Though my parents never played chess themselves, they always wanted their machines to be the smartest, most advanced and most challenging. I remember the Chafitz store in Rockville, Maryland very well! They had several chess computers set up that customers could play against. In the early 1980's I used to go there regularly on Saturdays and play against the machines. I eventually bought my Champion Sensory Chess Challenger from them. I don't remember what year the store closed, but it was a sad day for me...

...I just want to clarify, that my mother was responsible for the Boris Diplomat design not the original Boris. I will try to get a copy of the original sketches and send them to Steve Blincoe when I get a chance. I will also ask them more about David Slate and what exactly he did program. In addition to developing and manufacturing chess computers, my parents were also running their retail electronics company and raising two kids. So their memories of this time take a little bit of prodding. I remember going to school with a red vinyl BORIS IS KING binder as a kid. My sister and I also helped make Boris is King buttons from a hand pressed button machine in our dining room. Another piece of trivia. The first Boris Diplomats had a small flaw. The clear case that covered the pieces was the wrong size and all the pieces would fall out as soon as you tried to take the game with you. It was soon corrected with a tighter fitting top...

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