

Obituaries



Harold A Gallatin (01/27/1912 - 11/28/2002)

Harold was born in Martinsville, IL to Bessie and Will Gallatin, elder brother to Oscar, Edith, Esther, Paul and Mildred. In 1932 he left the family farm and came to Milwaukee on a motorcycle to attend Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE). For years later, he graduated with a major in Electrical Engineering and a minor in Aeronautical Sciences. In 1977, MSOE presented Harold with the "Outstanding Alumni Award." His Milwaukee apartment was also his workshop. His brother, Oscar joined him and together they built their first airplane, a Corbin Baby Ace powered by a refurbished 3-cylinder Harley 74 Radial. An employee of Allis Chalmers Mfg. Co. in West Allis, WI, Harold started in the Tractor Division and retired in 1968 as the Director of the Electrical Research and Development Lab. During his 33 years at Allis Chalmers his projects included work on diesel engines, turbines for Hoover Dam, submarine gyroscopes, road construction machinery so large that each wheel used a separate motor and rotary engine development. Because of his ingenious designs, Allis Chalmers was awarded three patents. After retiring, Harold paid Allis Chalmers for the rights to the rotary work he had done. His goal was to put his rotary engine in any aircraft including his Mooney Mite.

The rotary engine Harold built, based on Wankel's design, was the first rotary engine to run in Wisconsin. He built his engine using his homemade lathe referring to pictures and technical information from a science magazine. The rotary is a simple two moving part, reciprocating engine with a low weight versus high power ratio. Perfect for aviation. It ran for the first time about midnight one fall night in Wauwatosa, WI. No muffler! The metallic monster roared to life, belched an oily, smoky, exhaust into every room of the house, but it ran! (On display at the Pioneer Village Museum, Minden, NE) He demonstrated and championed the qualities of the rotary at every Fly-In from then on. On a sunny day in August 1993, Harold flew with tremendous satisfaction as a passenger in an RV4 with Powersport's first rotary conversion engine under the cowling. Mission accomplished! The planes Harold owned included a 1933 Heath Pietenpol, Corbin Baby Ace #14810, an American Eaglet, (NC522Y), an Aeronca K, NC17759, an Aeronca L3B, (NC46762), a Taylorcraft (NC96388), two Mooney Mites (N125C and NC3). He logged time in a Curtis Robin, a Pheasant, a DC-6 while shuttling EAA's Fly Baby - to name a few.

In 1951, Harold and five other pilots gathered at the Wind Lake home of Carl Schultz (EAA #2) to share aviation "how to's," and "how not to's." The seed for what would become the EAA was planted. When the EAA was incorporated, he was assigned EAA #20. He was a member of the Juneau, Madison, Milwaukee, and Watertown EAA Chapters. Shortly after his retirement, Harold and Marion, his wife of 63 years, moved to Lowell, WI. There was another dream to fulfill: to harness a renewable natural resource - water. Harold converted an old mill on the Beaver Dam River into a hydropower plant to produce electricity for his home. The excess electricity the hydro project generated was sold to a local power company and mission accomplished! Harold, his brothers Oscar and Paul were all private pilots who were initially self-taught. Their whole lives were spent sharing their interests to succeeding generations. All three brother's names have been placed on the EAA Memorial Wall. Harold always found time to assist fellow aviators and friends in solving technical problems. Harold generously supported EAA's foundations with his time, talents and funds, and related to anyone who would listen how and why EAA came into existence. He is missed!

Guestbook

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I have enjoyed many conversatuins with Harold over the years. What an avation dedicated genius and Great all around guy.

Submitted by: George P Bindl 0265176

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