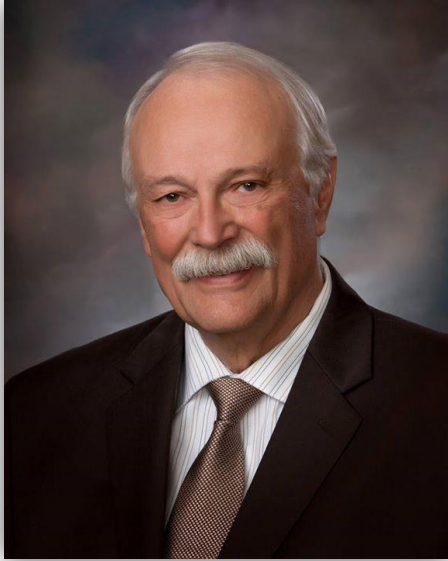


NORTH DAKOTA AVIATION HALL OF FAME

Gary Ness

Inducted: 2016



Gary Ness's interest in aviation began in the baggage compartment of an Aeronca Champ, as his father, Oscar, gave flight instruction in Fargo during the summer of 1946. Interest continued at the Walhalla airport, when he listened as his father integrated the new business of aerial application into the local farming community. Soloing on his sixteenth birthday and working in the family aerial operation at the Lisbon airport, Gary gained a larger appreciation for aviation. From birth to completing a Political Science degree, flying, horses, and sports were always at the forefront of his activities.

After graduating from the North Dakota State School of Science and North Dakota State University, in 1967 Gary was accepted into the Aviation Officer Candidate School at Pensacola, Florida. He was designated a Naval Aviator at Naval Air Station Chase Field, Beeville, Texas, where his Wings of Gold were pinned on by his father. During the final two

years of naval service, Ness was assigned as an Air-to-Air Gunnery and Carrier Qualification Flight Instructor at Training Squadron Four (VT-4) Naval Air Station Pensacola.

In 1986, Gary became the Executive Director of the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC) and served in that position until 2008. During Gary's tenure at the NDAC, he achieved many accomplishments, including leading the agency through the changes and new technologies introduced as the aviation industry progressed.

Gary served as Chairman of the National Association of State Officials (NASAO). He was honored with several awards: NASAO's Kenneth T. Rowe Ambassador of Aviation Award, National Business Aviation Association's Silk Scarf Award and the NDSU Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute Chairman's Award. He was a member of the Greater North Dakota Association Board, NDSCS Foundation Board, NDSCS Letter Winners Club and National Agricultural Aviation Association's Safety Curriculum Committee. He is a member of North Dakota State College of Science's Athletic Hall of Fame. Gary helped establish and served as Chairman of the North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame Committee.

Throughout his career Gary was active in state and national aviation issues, encouraging a strong network of communication between aviation associations, especially the North Dakota Aviation Council. Gary's efforts strengthened industry awareness and contributed to the national economy and well-being of the State of North Dakota.