

NORTH DAKOTA AVIATION HALL OF FAME

Darrol G. Schroeder

Inducted: 2009



Darrol Schroeder was born and raised in Davenport, ND. He began his aviation career early when he hitchhiked five miles to Hector Airport for lessons and soloed at age 16 in a 65-horsepower Aeronca Champ. He was a high school senior when he joined the North Dakota Air National Guard in 1947, and was commissioned upon graduation from NDSU in 1951.

He went on to become an Air Force instructor, flight examiner and test pilot. He served 40 years of active duty in Germany and France and the National Guard, rising to the rank of Major General. He retired in 1989 as a Command Pilot with over 5,000 fighter aircraft hours.

In 1957 Darrol founded Schroeder Aviation, Inc., an agricultural aviation and fixed-base operation in Davenport, ND, which he ran until 1989. He operated a fleet of 12 aircraft and accumulated over 12,000 aerial application hours serving Cass county area farmers.

As flight commander and later as the Director of Group operations of the North Dakota National Guard (Happy Hooligans), Darrol mentored many young fighter pilots assigned to him. He was also generous in sharing his

experience with new aerial applicators. He was promoted to Brigadier General in 1974 and was Chief of Staff of the NDANG. In 1980, he was assigned as the Air National Guard Assistant to the Commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command. In 1983, he was assigned as ANG assistant to the commander of Air Forces in Europe.

Upon retiring from the military, Darrol became Director of Business Development for the University of North Dakota Aerospace program and was instrumental in acquiring the first civilian high-altitude pressure chamber in the United States.

He has served as Treasurer of the National Agricultural Aviation Association. He serves on the National Aviation Hall of Fame Nominating Committee. He served on the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission from 1980-1993. He was one of the founders and first chairman of the board of the Fargo Air Museum. As a board member of MeritCare hospital, Darrol initiated the first air medical helicopter operation in the area. He has held all board positions and served as president of the North Dakota Aviation Association. In addition, he serves as a board member and consultant in the private aviation sector. He has also been the co-chairman of the biannual Fargo Airshow for twenty years. He was awarded the North Dakota National Leadership Award of Excellence in 1987 and the FAA Master Pilot Award in 2005 for 50 consecutive years of accident-free flight.

Darrol is an active pilot with 23,000 hours flight time in 138 different civilian and military aircraft.