

NORTH DAKOTA AVIATION HALL OF FAME

Gerald “Gerry” Beck

Inducted: 2008



Gerald S. (Gerry) Beck was born in 1949 at Britton, SD, and grew up on a farm in Guelph, ND. His introduction to aviation was when he took his first airplane ride to skydive while attending the University of North Dakota. In addition to being on the skydiving team, he earned his pilot's license at UND. After graduation in 1971, he taught Industrial Arts in the Grand Forks school system for 3 years. He formed Tri-State Aviation aerial spraying and aircraft maintenance facility in 1974 and operated out of the Wahpeton, ND, airport.

Gerry developed a number of crop spraying innovations that are in wide use today. He manufactured and sold the popular Super Boom for spray planes, an innovative design that increased airplane safety and performance. His influence in the aerial application industry helped create an effective ND Aerial Agricultural Aviation Association. He also represented North Dakota on the National Agricultural Aviation Association Board of

Directors and was chairman of the Research and Technology Committee for several years.

A vintage airplane restoration business grew out of his spraying operation. Gerry bought wrecked aircraft and rebuilt them for use in the flying operation. This grew into a passion and fascination with WWII airplanes, specifically the P-51 Mustang, and the restoration of them. His proudest accomplishment was the building of a P-51A from the ground up, which meant replicating all of the parts from original blueprints.

At the time of his death, he was involved in the “Red Tail” project, restoring a P-51C in honor of the Tuskegee Airmen. Notable among the planes he restored was one of only five flyable Japanese Zeros, the Navy TBM “Avenger” and the F-4U “Corsair.”

His mastery of the secrets of the war birds gained the attention and respect of the national aviation community. The airplane restoration work continues under the direction of his wife and partner, Cindy Schreiber-Beck.

Gerry's passion for vintage aircraft was instrumental in the creation of the Fargo Air Museum. He was involved in the vision, planning, fundraising and operation of the museum and served on the Board of Directors.

Gerry died in July 27, 2007 in an aircraft accident in Oshkosh, WI. A man of few words, but a man of true knowledge and the capacity to share his knowledge with all who showed an interest in his world of aviation. We will miss him but celebrate the fact that we shared the world of aviation with him.