



## Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame

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### Five Inducted into Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame

MIDDLETON, WI. November 9, 2004 - The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame continued its fine tradition of honoring individuals for their accomplishments in state aviation at its annual Investiture Ceremony and Banquet at the EAA AirVenture Museum in Oshkosh. Inducted on November 6 were Harold "Duffy" Gaier, Field Morey, Herbert Hardrath, Walter Lees and Paul Culver.

"Duffy" Gaier began his career in aviation on the sod runways of central Wisconsin near his hometown of Colby in 1966. In 1973, he settled at Neillsville where he helped develop the airport, gave flight instruction and served as the FBO. In 1986, Gaier was named the FBO and manager of the Marshfield Airport, doing business as Duffy's Aircraft Sales and Leasing. He continued to work for improvements at both Neillsville and Marshfield, including lighting, runway extensions, ramps and taxiways.

Along the way, Duffy acquired the Pilot Examiner rating. Duffy has conducted over 3,500 flight checks. He is known as aviation's best friend in central Wisconsin.

Field Morey was born into aviation. Field is the son of aviation pioneer and 1987 WAHF Inductee Howard Morey. Field is a long time flight instructor and former manager of the Morey Field airport. Field is internationally known as an aviation entrepreneur who launched a revolutionary flight-training program designed to give pilots a wide range of experience in weather, terrain and airspace. The *West Coast Adventures* training flights take two pilots on a weeklong trip from the Midwest to the West Coast and back. Morey has conducted over 250 such flights, with over 500 graduates. Field is also an FAA Pilot Examiner and has certified nearly 2,000 pilots. Both Morey and Gaier are recipients of the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics Lifetime Achievement Award.

The late Herbert Hardrath was born in Manitowoc in 1922 and enlisted in the Navy for WWII. At war's end, he used his G-I benefits to obtain the education that enabled him to become one of America's foremost experts in the field of aircraft materials and structure fatigue. Hardrath began work with NASA in 1947 and remained until his retirement in 1980. He served as an accident consultant with the NTSB. Hardrath was also a consultant to the Scientific Advisory Board of the U.S. Air Force Ad Hoc Committee on Structures for the B-70, B-47, B-52, KC-135, C-130 and C-5 aircraft. Hardrath also contributed to the manned space program. His work merited the NASA Apollo Achievement Award, granted "in appreciation of dedicated service to the nation as a member of the team which has advanced the nation's capabilities in aeronautics and space...culminating in Apollo 11's successful achievement of man's first landing on the moon."

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Eau Claire native Paul Culver began flying in 1916 and was awarded Expert Pilot's License No. 74 by the Aero Club of America. He was one of the first five pilots to volunteer for the Army Signal Corps, which evolved into the Army Air Service when the United States entered WWI in 1917. Being an experienced instructor, he was too valuable to risk in combat, so the Army sent him to train aviators at Wright Field in Ohio and Ellington Field in Texas. In 1918, Culver was one of six top Army pilots chosen to inaugurate scheduled U.S. Air Mail Service. Culver left the Army and aviation to pursue a business career and raise a family, but he volunteered for duty as a naval aviator in WWII. He died in 1964.

Walter Lees was born in Janesville and was raised in Mazomanie. He found his life's work watching a Curtiss pusher fly over Ashland in 1911. He was a mechanic/pilot with the Benoist Company, making his first flight in 1912.

Lees completed pilot training at the Curtiss Aviation School in San Diego, and then transferred to the Curtiss school in Newport News, Virginia, where he was certified in Flying Boats and JN-4's as Expert Aviator No. 79. When the United States entered WWI, Lees immediately joined the Air Service. He became a flight instructor, and was one of Billy Mitchell's first flight instructors.

In 1931, Lees and Fred Brossy, flying a Packard diesel-powered Bellanca cabin plane, set a record for a non-refueled airplane flight of 84 hours and 32 minutes. The record held until 1986. Lees retired in 1946 after 35-years in aviation. Both Lees and Culver were inducted in the Pioneer category, for those who made significant achievements in aviation before 1927.

The mission statement of the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame is to collect and preserve the history of aviation in Wisconsin, recognize those who made that history, inform others of it, and promote aviation education to future generations. To date, nearly 70 men and women have been recognized for their aviation achievements in Wisconsin.

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