

NORTH DAKOTA AVIATION HALL OF FAME

Geneva Schow Oleson

Inducted: 2013



Geneva Schow Oleson was born near Regent, North Dakota and raised in Stanton. She was introduced to aviation as a child by her parents, Martin and Madeline Schow. Even as a preschooler, Geneva was thrilled to ride in her father's open cockpit airplane.

Geneva learned to fly as a teenager under the instruction of her father, a North Dakota aviation pioneer. She went on to earn her private pilot's license at Dickinson in 1945. Geneva later became certified as an aerial applicator pilot in 1971.

Geneva's legacy was her untiring efforts to advance all stages of early aviation in North Dakota. In November of 1946, Geneva established the first aviation publication in North Dakota. The *Dakota Flyer* included an editorial column for the advancement of aviation, a page devoted to the North Dakota Flying Farmers Association (the fastest growing aviation organization in the state), and

a Civil Aeronautics Administration section. The *Dakota Flyer* encouraged communities to establish airports to enhance the development and growth of their town and to promote business growth and tourism in North Dakota. The magazine also informed Veterans of the GI Bill's provision for flight instruction.

During the 1940s Geneva became a member of the Dakota Chapter of the Ninety-Nines, the woman pilot group organized by Amelia Earhart. As a member, she co-piloted a Cessna 182 from Calgary, Canada to Baton Rouge, Louisiana in the 25th jubilee of the annual Powder Puff Derby.

Geneva managed a private airport at Ft. Clark (near Stanton) in 1946 and assisted with the management of the Mott Airport. She also served as Public Relations Director for the Bismarck Aviation Center and was the announcer at air shows throughout North Dakota.

In 1961, Geneva and her husband, Todd, purchased Dickinson Air Service. In 1962, Todd was killed while aerial crop spraying. Geneva, out of her passion for aviation and love for her husband, established a scholarship for future aviators. This scholarship has produced a Navy pilot, an Air National Guard pilot, and several airline pilots.

Geneva was also dedicated to her children and community. She was a 4-H and Campfire Leader, Saddle Club member and an active member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Dickinson.