



Forward... in Aviation

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2005 WAHF Banquet — Five inducted at annual event

It was a night to remember, as five Wisconsin aviators were inducted into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame on October 22 in a ceremony held at the EAA AirVenture Museum in Oshkosh. Duane Esse, Jerry Mehlhaff, Anton Brotz, Carlyle Godske and Wendell McEldowney were honored for their accomplishments. McEldowney and Godske were inducted in the Pioneer category, for those who made achievements in aviation before 1927.

Mehlhaff is a South Dakota native, born in 1942 and raised in Franklin, Wisconsin.

He soloed and earned his private pilot certificate in '62. He joined the US Navy just as the United States escalated its involvement in Vietnam, and served a tour of duty on an aircraft carrier.

Mehlhaff returned to the states in 1967, became a flight instructor and, in 1969, began a career in aviation by purchasing a 200-acre farm near Rochester, Wisconsin in Racine County, turning it into an airport. He acquired dealerships for Piper, Mooney and Bellanca aircraft and also managed the Burlington Airport, where he started a flight school.

In 1988, he purchased the type certificates for Champion Aircraft Model 7, 8 and 11 and began supplying parts to Champions. He started work on and created his patented metal spar wing for the Champion 8KCAB Decathlon; it was certified in 1990. He then introduced the Champion Scout, Explorer, Citabria, the Aurora, Adventurer and other aircraft. His company produced over 6,000 aircraft of all models.

Mehlhaff summarized his approach to aviation when he said, "To start with a piece of fabric and a raw tube and to assemble it and watch it fly away, that's a real feeling of accomplishment."

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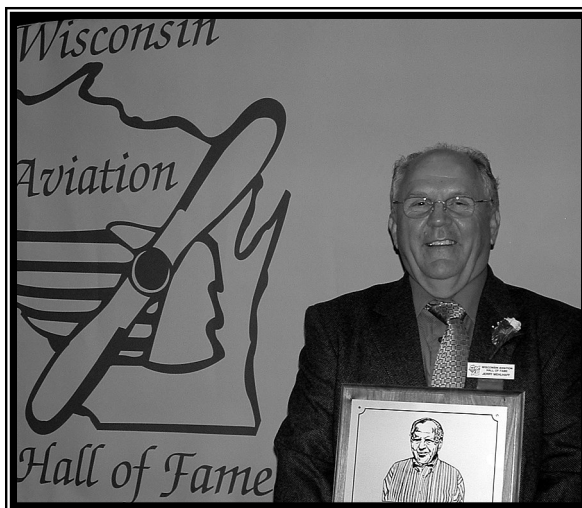
WAHF Mission Statement:

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.

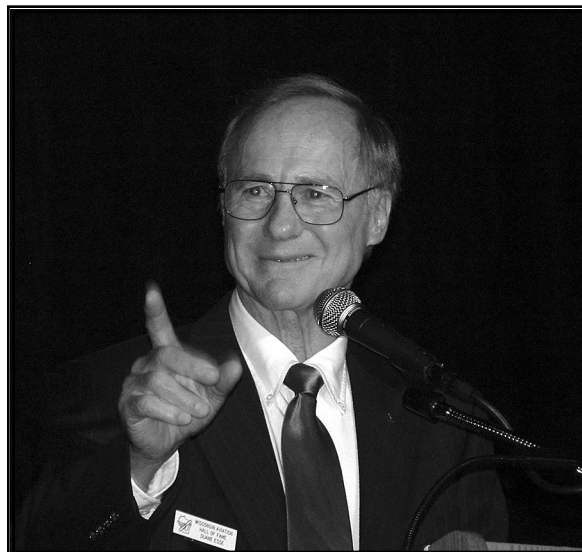
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Jerry Mehlhaff, Owner/Founder American Champion Aircraft



Duane Esse shares a light moment with the audience as he accepts his induction into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame.