

Daniel Guggenheim Medal

MEDALIST FOR 1975

For his many engineering, management and leadership contributions in the development of general aviation from a novelty forty years ago to a key part of the world's transportation system today.



DWANE L. WALLACE

General aviation is a catch-all category that can be summed up in one sentence: If it isn't military or airline flying, it's general aviation.

The time was when general aviation consisted of barnstorming, stunt flying and occasional charter trips. Today, it is a full-fledged industry serving more than 14,000 airports, carrying 110 million passengers a year, and participating in virtually every phase of the nation's economic and social structure from agriculture to mercy missions.

That it has achieved respectability and importance is due to the efforts of men like Dwane L. Wallace, head of the Cessna Aircraft Company for more than 40 years. Under his guidance, Cessna became the first company in the world to manufacture 100,000 airplanes—and all but 200 were built by Cessna during Wallace's tenure.

Born in Belmont, Kansas, Wallace took his first airplane ride in a Swallow bi-plane when he was 10 years old—the pilot was his uncle, Clyde Cessna. Wallace was bitten by the aviation bug that same day and, determined to make flying his career, eventually went to the University of Wichita from where he graduated with a degree in aeronautical engineering in 1933. He worked briefly for Walter Beech but left after a year to help his uncle reopen the Cessna plant in Wichita, which had been closed during the Depression.

After two years as Cessna's general manager, Wallace succeeded his uncle upon the latter's retirement. In 1940, he gave the tiny company its first real stability by selling Cessna's first twin-engine airplane, the T-50, to the Canadian Air Force as a trainer and all-purpose aircraft—followed by ensuing contracts with the U.S. Army and Air Corps.

In the postwar years, Wallace directed Cessna into a new expansion program culminating in the broadest product line offered by any airframe manufacturer in general aviation. He retired in 1975, having steered Cessna to a position of prominence and general aviation itself into an accepted and vital status in air transportation.