

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



Clarence L. (Clancy) Sayen

Clarence Sayen was born in Rock, Michigan on February 12, 1919. His father was a farmer and logger and, like so many of his neighbors, hard working but poor. Clarence managed to get through high school and then four years of higher education at Northern Michigan College by working his way in the summer as a crewman on the ore boats. He graduated with honors and a degree in business administration in 1941.

World War II had begun and Clancy wanted to fly. He was rejected by the Air Force because of the absence of a right index finger. At the age of eight, a companion chopped it off with an axe as they were building a log cabin. Though disappointed that the Air Force would not take him, he persisted in his dream of being a pilot by enrolling in schools at Houghton, Kalamazoo, and Chicago. Not long after, he was teaching flying to Air Force cadets.

He came to the attention of Braniff Airways and was hired as a copilot on national and international runs to South America. He remained with Braniff five years and, during that time, picked up his masters degree in Economic Geography at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas.

He also became an active member in the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA). It was during a stint as delegate to a bargaining session in Chicago where his business acumen came to

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR

the fore. Not long after, he left Braniff and was elected executive vice president of the association. He moved up rapidly to president.

As the head of ALPA, Sayen introduced several innovations in the realm of airline safety. He was appointed to various national and international commissions and advisory bodies and became an advisor to Presidents Harry Truman and John F. Kennedy.

In 1962, Northern Michigan University conferred the honorary degree of doctor of science upon Sayen during commencement ceremonies in Marquette. In 1964, at the age of 46, Clarence Sayen died as a passenger in a Boeing 727 which crashed into Lake Michigan on its approach to O'Hare International Airport. He was survived by his widow (former Marjorie ^{Alford} ~~Alford~~ of Marquette), a daughter Cynthia, his mother Mrs. Pauline Sayen, and a brother Arnold Sayen.

TJ Mudge, May 2004