

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



Emil John Kaurala

Airplane pilot, mechanic and enthusiast, Emil John Kaurala was born on August 21, 1924 in Mass City, Michigan. He was the third child of Finnish immigrant parents. From a young age, Emil had the desire to be involved with airplanes, and as a boy built many sophisticated models while becoming intimately involved in auto mechanics.

Emil's formal education ended at the close of the eighth grade, as his father needed his help with the family farm. With the onset of World War II, Emil enlisted in the military and served honorably in the Army, during which time he was sent for further training in motor mechanics. He completed his enlistment in the South Pacific in 1946. Upon his return to Mass City, he married Mary Alice (Stratton) Kaurala and worked locally as an auto

mechanic, never losing his desire to be a pilot and to work on airplanes.

An answer to this desire came in the late 1950s when Emil's brother-in-law, Dale Holbrook, sought his partnership in a fledgling fixed-base operation in Marquette County. In 1961, Emil moved his wife and four-year-old daughter, Jean, to Negaunee to join a business and begin a coveted career that would ultimately span thirty-plus years. First named Peninsula Air Service, the business later became Northern Airmotive.

Over the thirty years, Emil enjoyed the expertise and collegiality of many aircraft mechanics and pilots and was instrumental in their education and pursuit of careers in the field of aeronautics. He himself became certified in aircraft maintenance by attending and successfully completing several aircraft

maintenance courses.

In time, Emil became a much-valued mechanic and visionary for the local area. His many accomplishments include the first air ambulance service in Marquette County, formal flight instruction, base maintenance, repair, and routine inspection, and a very successful Marquette-to-Lansing charter service named *Capitol City Express*. Above all, Emil gave years of faithful, high quality service to the pilots and planes of Marquette County.

