

## Russ Beach Tribute, 2018

Good morning Ladies Gentlemen, Dignitaries and family members in attendance. It is my honor and privilege to provide some background about Russell (Russ) Beach at the commemoration today.

Russ Beach, of Smiths Falls, Ontario was a driving force in the development of the Smiths Falls Montague airport as well as aviation in Canada. He passed away on May 26, 1995, just a few days short of his 85th birthday.

Russ Beach was well known across Canada in business circles as Canada's leading metal box manufacturer and as the popular president of Canada's largest member national aviation association, the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA). In recent years Beach was Canada's oldest active jet pilot. He flew his own Cessna Citation jet aircraft for several years after he turned 80. Although Beach Industries Limited became Canada's largest metal box manufacturer, Beach was best known in aviation as the protector of the rights of private pilots and private aircraft owners to enjoy the freedom of the skies.

Russ Beach learned to fly at the age of 45. He bought his first amphibian seaplane shortly thereafter. He owned a series of aircraft which he flew on business trips on behalf of his company. He joined the COPA board of directors in 1964.

He was elected secretary-treasurer in 1968, and, became president of COPA in 1971, a post which he held until stepping down in 1993. Under his guidance, COPA made its greatest strides, and became one of Canada's most successful national aviation organizations. At the time of his death, Beach was still a COPA director.

Russ Beach was the recipient of both Canadian and international

aviation awards which recognized the effort he put forth on behalf of reasonable and progressive government policies on aviation matters. He became well acquainted with most Ministers of Transport as a result of heading numerous delegations on regulatory aeronautical matters. He was also a vice-president of IAOPA, the International Aircraft Owner and Pilot Associations that represent pilots and aircraft owner associations in 34 countries. He chaired an IAOPA World Assembly in the Philippines, during the 1970's. In his IAOPA position, he became well respected by leaders of aviation associations in many countries.

Notwithstanding his accomplishments in Aviation and as an industrialist Russ Beach was a very generous benefactor in the local community. Of course the Airport bears his name due to his input to the development of aviation. In addition he made numerous donations to the betterment of the community in which he worked, lived and loved. It will be impossible to name all of his contributions to the community, but here is a small sample. Mr. Beach was a major contributor to the ICU unit at the Smiths Falls Community Hospital, a Unit dedicated to his late wife. When called upon Mr. Beach aided in the completion of the Helipad at the hospital in Smiths Falls. His contribution to our local cemetery made it possible to bury our loved ones there all year round, as opposed to storing in the vault until spring. Mr Beach upon his passing made a generous bequest to the SFFC of his personal hangar there, and the Welcome Center at the Airport bears a ceramic mosaic of his personal twin engine Cessna Aircraft. Let us not forget the many years of employment he provided to hundreds of people in and around our community,

Mr. Russell J. Beach was in every sense of the word a “Community Builder”