

For more information on Perry Dillon, please contact Mary Alice & Stanley Ricottilli at:
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PERRY E. DILLON

Born in Barton, West Virginia, on March 29, 1937, Perry E. Dillon not only pursued his own passion for flight but steadfastly assisted others in pursuing theirs, ensuring aviation thrived in West Virginia. Perry's love for aviation took root early in life after seeing a P-51 Mustang up close. It was not until 1956 in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, that Perry was able to record his first flight. It would not be the last time he would fly; in fact, it was only the beginning.

Having experienced the wonder of flight, Perry continued flight training in Elkins, West Virginia, as money allowed. He finally secured his Private Pilot license in April 1960. He continued down this path, supporting his growing family by day and pursuing his aviation dreams in the evenings. It was June 1961 before Perry secured his Commercial Pilot's license. He immediately began building time towards his ultimate goal of employment with an airline. He became a Certified Flight Instructor in January 1962; however, Perry experienced a temporary roadblock. There was no demand for flight instruction nor any aircraft to provide instruction. This spurred his decision to move to Mississippi to train for crop dusting.

Fate would step in while Perry was in Mississippi in the form of a group of Elkins, WV, residents who were seeking an instructor for their soon-to-be-formed flying club. Perry accepted their invitation to return to Elkins and in May 1962, the Club was operational with their first aircraft. In the first year of operation, Perry would assist 27 pilots through their first solo flight with a total of 100 students in training by January 1964. In April 1964, Perry finally achieved his dream of becoming an airline pilot after securing a position with Lake Central Airlines. His professional airline career would span more than three decades and culminate in upgrading to Captain with U.S. Air before retiring in 1994.

Perry's love for aviation endured after retirement. His selfless demeanor made him approachable to all and he readily shared his wealth of knowledge with fellow pilots at the Elkins-Randolph County Airport. It was his unwavering support of aviation and nearly fifty years of training pilots in the Elkins Pilot Club that earned him recognition from the Aircraft Owners and Pilot Association (AOPA). He and his wife, Rita, were the parents of two sons - Nick and Rick and three daughters - Betsy, Deb and Donna. Perry died at his home in Beverly, WV, on June 16, 2021. His commitment to aviation was evident to all who knew him.

The state of West Virginia is proud to recognize Perry E. Dillon's great influence on aviation.

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