

For more information on Thomas E. Cochran please contact Jeff Bubar at: [mainelander@protonmail.com](mailto:mainelander@protonmail.com)

## THOMAS E. COCHRAN

Born in Beaver, West Virginia, on July 8, 1940, Thomas (Tom) R. Cochran dedicated the latter part of his career to ensuring aviation's success in southern West Virginia. Originally a coal miner, Tom pursued a second career in aviation, attending the Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was there he earned his Federal Aviation Administration certifications in 1968 in aircraft maintenance, radio operations, and aircraft accident insurance investigation.

After receiving his A & P license, Tom was hired by Trans World Airlines (TWA) as an aircraft mechanic based at Dulles International Airport where he worked for 3 years until a nationwide layoff forced him to look elsewhere for employment. He found work with the Pittson Coal Company and remained until retiring on July 7, 1997. The following day, Tom was hired as the Director of Raleigh County Memorial Airport, located in Beaver, WV. It was here his aviation career would flourish.

Aside from Tom's commitment to a safe airport operating environment, his foresight and understanding of how airports serve as economic engines is second to none. His role in promoting the airport as a self-sustaining entity ripe with economic opportunity for the entire region propelled the Raleigh County Memorial Airport forward. Under Tom's guidance, the airport completed several projects to improve safety, including obstruction removal, major interior and exterior passenger terminal renovations, and the oversight of the development of the corporate hangar area and industrial park which led the way for future economic growth. His push for economic diversification led to a partnership with higher education, offering training to those seeking positions in aerospace technology. This alone is extraordinary as graduates now have the choice to stay in West Virginia for the entirety of their aviation careers, keeping the economy growing.

It is perhaps Tom's service to his community that most recognize him. Always an advocate for West Virginia, Tom served with numerous volunteer organizations, including Visit Southern WV and the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority. Tom's successful career and outstanding character are truly inspiring. His impact on aviation perfectly lends itself to his induction into the WV Aviation Hall of Fame. Tom and his wife, Barbara, currently reside in Kingsland, Georgia. They are the parents of Wendy Campbell and Susan Cochran and the grandparents of Isaiah, David and Amelia Campbell.

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