

BLAINE AIRPORT PROMOTION GROUP

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8891 Airport Road C-2, Blaine MN. 55449



THE EDUCATION COORDINATOR OCTOBER 11, 2012



In 1943, a “temporary” classroom and administration building was constructed at the University of Minnesota Airport located in New Brighton, Minnesota. The U of M had hundreds of flight students and research problems that needed hanger space and runway operations and had received formal approval for construction of the airport by the Minnesota State Aviation Commission in 1942. All private flying was banned due to war circumstances. The U of M Physics Department carried out research projects sponsored by the Office of Naval Research and by NASA at that site until 1967.

In 1950, The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) and the University of Minnesota entered discussions for a new Anoka County Airport in Blaine, Minnesota. The U of M advanced funds for the purchase of approximately 280 acres needed for contemplated runways and building area on the relocated site.

According to the agreement; in 1951 MAC reimbursed the University of Minnesota for capital expenditures made to the relocated site in the amount of \$37,755.

In 1952 the U of M Airport in New Brighton was abandoned and the “temporary” classroom and administration building was moved to its current location at the Anoka County Airport in Blaine and continued to be used as headquarters for the U of M Flight Services until 1996.



Diane Mahon, worked as executive assistant for University Flight Services. Flight training and ground school were part of everyday life for seven days a week as well as evening hours providing night flight opportunity. Ground school was conducted three evenings a week.

The staff pilots at U of M Flight Services logged 100,000 miles a year serving the University Hospital and Clinic’s Medical Outreach program to over 30 communities throughout the Midwest. One aircraft was equipped as an air ambulance with an on call pilot for urgent care flights for either the U of M Organ Transplant program or the U of M Neonatal unit.



Chief Pilot, Waldo Anderson and Executive Assistant, Diane Mahon

There were 37 medical professionals at University Hospital who participated in the program each year. Patients were grateful for the “Traveling Doctors”. Traveling to the Twin Cities in those days would have been a major deterrent in seeking health care and many patients would rather forego their treatment if they had to travel long distances.

The University of Minnesota began an aviation program in 1929 and acquired as many as 13 airplanes and accumulated a total of 10,000 hours per year in student flight time.

In 1981 the FAA General Aviation District Office outsourced administration of FAA written exams so the



U of M Flight Service was made a “Designated Written Test Center”. Prior to computerized programming I would monitor the students being tested by observing the test room through a window provided in my office.

We also provided primary flight training to a select group of ROTC cadets in all branches of the military. Most were Air Force ROTC upperclassmen that entered the ground school learning the principles of flight, aircraft operation, radio communications, weather, navigation, and flight planning; earning the equivalent of a private pilot’s license. Many of our flight students were hired as flight instructors for the U of M and went on to have careers in aviation as commercial and corporate pilots as well as working for the FAA.

In addition to our full-time pilots and our flight instructors, we had two full-time aircraft mechanics. The pilots did all of the ground work in checking the weather, filing flight plans, pulling the aircraft out of the hanger, fueling and piloting the aircraft. The pilots would provide donuts for the passengers, make coffee for the flights, and help passengers with their baggage when needed.

My duties included scheduling air transportation for all U of M flight activities. In the early years, most flights were agriculture related. In the later years, the U of M Hospital and Medical Outreach programs became our major customers. Most of these flights would leave at 7:00 am and return about 6:00 pm. There were lots of flight activity and it was always a thrill to watch student pilots take their first solo and also see them off to their first cross-country flight.



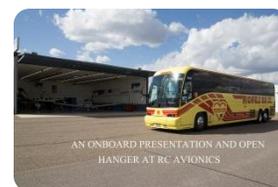
Diane Mahon provided the material researched from the U of M Archives. Diane grew up in Winsted, Minnesota. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Minnesota, Carlson School of Management. She worked many years at the U of M starting in 1975. (U of M Foundation 1975-78, Housing and Residential Life 1978-80, U of M Computer Services 1980-82, U of M Flight Facilities 1982-96 and Auxiliary Services 1996-2012.)



John and Carrie Krack joined us at Key Air to assemble a packet of information that was provided to each guest on the tour.

The tour was one of several the SLP, Parks & Recreation Department provides each season and we were selected for this part of the tour by Tour Director, Sharie Linke as an introduction to the Blaine Airport community.

The tour provided an inside look at the airport and some of the businesses on the field opened their hanger doors and stepped



onto the bus to give brief presentations about the history of the airport and their business.

The bus tour concluded with an inside tour of the Golden Wings Museum with Craig Schiller, Harvey Karth, and Roger Hansen as tour guides.

