

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR FRATERNITY

Part 3 – The Founders

By: James McCarthy

In Parts 1 & 2 of this history series of our Fraternity we began with some background and history about our “Founders” **Russell J Brinkley**, **Edwin Lyons**, **John Hickey**, **Walter Harvey Jr**, and **Harry Davis**. The first three were covered in Parts 1 & 2. I will cover the final two in this installment. These two seemed to be the more difficult to research and as a result I don’t have as much of their history.

## Walter Harvey Jr

According to his daughter, Jackie Evangelista, **Walter Harvey Jr** was “very small in stature, but had a huge heart”. He was a family man with a wide range of talents and worked as an aviator, a flight instructor, an air traffic controller, and a concert musician. He was a lifelong resident of Pennsylvania but did a fair amount of traveling. He was further described by his daughter as the original “Great Waldo Pepper”.

Walt was born on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1904. I could find little data on when or how he became a pilot and when he began teaching flying. The FAA Certification Branch says they only have a record of the last change to his certificate number in 1958 and indicated that he was a Commercial pilot with SEL, SES, and MEL privileges. We know that, as part of his contribution to the war effort, he was hired to teach military aviators and gave instruction in Harrisburg, PA to many who eventual flew off the USS Intrepid commissioned in August of 1943.

He also was hired to fly reconnaissance flights over Colorado to map it. And, around 1954 he was asked to fly reconnaissance over the Allegheny Mountains to find a downed airliner. This turned out to be a particularly poignant pursuit when he found out one of his daughters was a passenger on that flight.

Walt worked in the control tower at the Harrisburg/York State Airport. Later he moved to what is now the Harrisburg International Airport on the Olmstead grounds at Middletown just a few miles outside of Harrisburg. He worked there in the tower and preparing and briefing aviation weather. He retired from the FAA when he became ill and could no longer work.

He was an accomplished musician who played concert violin and was a standup bass player. He taught at the Philadelphia Conservatory and was reported to fill in and play bass with the **Jimmy Dorsey** and **Glenn Miller** bands when they played in Philadelphia and New York. When the early Silver Wings members got together for meetings he got a group together and entertained for the occasion.

## Harry Davis

Of our five founders, Harry Davis is the one I could find the least information on. We know that Harry was born on Nov 30<sup>th</sup>, 1910 and that he was a long-term employee of TWA joining the company in 1929. He was based in Harrisburg, PA where he was the company Radio Operator for that station. He



Harry Davis at an Executive meeting in Philadelphia in 1967



Humble beginnings. TWA  
ticket counter, Harrisburg  
May 1939

wrote a periodic column that appeared in the TWA Employees Magazine, *Skyliner*, providing the news for the Harrisburg employees. In 1953 he was stationed at Jacks Mountain, PA weather station before returning to Harrisburg as a Transportation Agent.

Our Fraternity historical records show that Harry first soloed in an OX-5 equipped Eaglerock aircraft back in October 1928. It is logical to think that this, as well as be based in Harrisburg, might have been the link that first brought Harry and Russ Brinkley together as Russ Brinkley was the first president of the OX-5 organization prior to founding the Silver Wings Fraternity.

It seems that TWA moved Harry to their operation in St. Louis where he retired. He died on June 11, 1994 in Olivette, St. Louis County, MO.

In future installments of this history column I plan to glean the pages of our Newsletter, *Slipstream*, archived copies to capture significant events for our Fraternity. As the newsletter was first published in 1974 this leaves a gap between founding and 1974 with little opportunity to discover details of the Fraternity activities. The issues from 1974 to present should result in a more complete story.

#### Additional Sources for Part 3:

- TWA Skyliner magazine – Volumes 1-No 7, 2-No 52, 3-No.9, 8-No 10, 11-No 52, 30-No 16
- TWA Line Squalls, August, 1932
- Harrisburg Telegraph, January 18, 1946, pp. 8
- St. Louis Post Dispatch, June 12, 1994, PP. 53
- [http://www.airfields-freeman.com/CA/Airfields\\_CA\\_LA\\_W.htm#dyer](http://www.airfields-freeman.com/CA/Airfields_CA_LA_W.htm#dyer)
- <http://www.locateancestors.com/harry-davis-missouri>
- [https://www.faa.gov/about/history/milestones/media/first\\_pilots\\_license.pdf](https://www.faa.gov/about/history/milestones/media/first_pilots_license.pdf)
- <https://www.intrepidmuseum.org/LatestNews/April-2014/>