

ROBERT LEE MOORE (2000) (1920-2006)

Bob Moore grew up during the “Roaring Twenties” – the Golden Age of Flying – when adventurers were exploring the Earth – and the airplane. His family lived a comfortable life in Texas, and then the Great Depression arrived. His Father's health deteriorated and eventually, like so many other fathers who were having difficulty supporting their families, he “fell or jumped” from a hotel room while attending a clinic in Dallas. Also like so many families, the insurance they thought they had vanished either



Bob Moore and the PIK20E at Sun Valley - Photo by Cec Craig

because the insurance companies went out of business or the agents kept the premiums for themselves.

He first discovered soaring when he read the 1929 *National Geographic* article on the subject in 1929. Bob's health was not good in those days but, nevertheless, he pursued many hobbies. Among them were building model airplanes and experimenting with a chemistry set. While in high school, he and a friend built a Chanute type bi-plane hang glider. Fortunately, the glider was destroyed, without injury to the pilot, on the first test flight over level ground. Their plans for the next flight included jumping off a cliff!

Later he saw an issue of *Soaring* magazine in a library, joined SSA, decided to start a glider club in the local area and build a Primary glider. To quote him about the first flight: “the most exciting (day) of my life, it easily outranked getting married or completing a Ph.D.” From then on soaring became almost an obsession which he pursued for over sixty years.

Fortunately, he went to a good high school and earned good grades. After graduating in 1938, he went to North Texas State Teachers College in Denton, TX graduating in 1942 and then earned a M.A. and Ph.D in chemistry from the University of Texas at Austin., graduating in 1947.

He then joined the Hanford Atomic Project in Richland, WA. where he organized the Richland Section of the American Chemical Society and was its first Chairman. In 1980 he was the first recipient of the Richland Section's Outstanding Chemist Award.

Bob Moore started a soaring club in Richland and introduced many people to the sport. He was a charter member of the Columbia Basin Soaring Association, belonged to the Seattle Glider Council, the Self-Launching Sailplane Pilots Association, the Vintage Sailplane Association and several other flying organizations. He owned a series of gliders including a Schweizer SGU 2-22, a Schweizer TG-3, Bowlus, Laister-Kaufmann LK-10A, Schweizer SGS 1-21, Bolkow Phoebus, Nelson Hummingbird, Eiri Avion PIK 20E and a Flugzeugbau DG-600M.

He served as SSA Governor for Washington and then was the first elected SSA director from Region eight on the SSA Board of Directors, serving eight years. He was Vice President of the Society and also the first Chairman of the SSA Membership Committee. In this capacity he helped create the SSA Chapter program. He was a promoter of motorgliding but also conscious of safety and published articles in *Soaring* on the subject and contributed to the Safety column.



His interest in competition was strong, participating in and winning many contests, the first of which was in 1958. He organized one of the first motorglider contests. In 1982, he set a National motorglider record for speed around a 300 km triangle, 82.62 kph. He also held several Washington state motorglider records.

Because of his various illnesses throughout his life, he worried about reaching the natural lifespan or even reaching the next century. He did so; he continued soaring into his eighties and died in 2006 at age 85 after a long and productive life.

Bob Moore served as SSA Vice President, flew in National competitions and was an author – the autobiography *As I Knew Him*. He earned Silver # 180 in 1953, Gold #49 in 1956 and Diamond #13 (Intl #113) in 1958.

