



John Lewis Wyss

September 20, 1919 - May 4, 2016

As the adage goes... "Old pilots never die they just get a new set of wings" John Lewis Wyss, age 96, got his new set of wings Wednesday May 4th, 2016 in St. James Missouri. Born in Weldon, Missouri September 20th, 1919 John was raised on the family farm. He was the only son of Connie and Joe Wyss. As a child of the depression, John worked to help the family by hunting and selling rabbit skins. He would pay a penny for the shot and sell the skins for two pennies. Being the first child of the family to finish high school, he saved those pennies to buy a suit to make his mom proud at graduation. As he got older, he moved to breaking mules for the family income, never realizing this would be the beginning of a lifetime of training ornery animals and pilots. John was passionate about learning, with any extra money he had would pay for a class to attend the Missouri School of Mines in Rolla where he studied Aeronautical Engineering until 1941. Having watched the crop dusters passing by in those beautiful machines, he was determined to fly one. With the knowledge he gained in the few years he could pay for school, John made his way to St. Louis and talked himself into a job as a mechanic in one of the airport hangers. September 21st, 1940 John married Eliza Davis and on January 9th, 1951 they had their only daughter and the jewel of John's eye, Konda. John and Eliza divorced in 1969. With the start of a family and his passion for planes he worked hard to become an Aircraft Inspector with the Bureau of Aeronautics for the Navy from

1941 to 1943. In 1943 he joined the Army where he would become certified as a Flight Engineer.

As was typical of John, he was always looking to make a little extra money, so in any idle time, he would sneak off the base in Alabama to break a farmer's horse at his place nearby. This only came to light when they had discharge papers ready for him in December 1945 and couldn't find him on base. Lucky for John they decided to proceed with the discharge instead of throwing him in the brig. After leaving the Army, John worked for McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis and was an Inspector for the Navy. He saved every penny he could and bought his first airplane with a friend. With hours of time and effort he rebuilt the plane; his second job became teaching other people how to fly to get enough flight hours to apply for his dream job, flying for American Airlines. In 2016 John was one of two remaining survivors of the American Airlines class of October 29th, 1951. His classmate described his flying best.. John did everything that DC-4 could do and lots of things that it couldn't or at least shouldn't have done. These lessons he passed on to his daughter as Konda and John spent years "playing"; performing aeronautical acrobatics at air shows and enjoying the passion of flight together. With that training class behind him, John went on to be a Flight Captain for American Airlines and flew with them until his mandatory retirement September 19th, 1979 at the young age of 60. Upon retirement, John moved back to run the family farm in Dixon Missouri and continued to pursue his passion of flying and teaching others to fly. John's beginnings in mule training could not have prepared him better for the many students he had behind the yolk of a plane, least of which his oldest granddaughter, Wendy. On many of her landings he would have felt safer on the back of a wild mule. John continued to teach and fly until 2010 when his back finally pulled him out of the cockpit of his most loved restoration, his 1934 Fairchild 22. After over 60 years of flying there was never a day he did not miss being airborne.

In 1990, Konda returned home with her husband and youngest daughter to work the farm and enjoy time with John. Through high school and college

Sarah, John's youngest granddaughter, made many memories with John. In December 2000, John was blessed with the gift of marriage to Paula Stricker. Paula, was the best wife, friend, and caretaker he or his family could ever imagine. He loved Paula dearly.

John will be truly missed by those he leaves behind, his wife Paula Stricker, his daughter Konda Pulley, his granddaughter Wendy Kowalik and Alfie, his granddaughter Sarah Pulley, his stepsons Wes Stricker and Pam, Paul Stricker and Joe, Charles Stricker and Linda, and Steve Stricker and Lana. His great grandchildren, Jon Rowdy Kowalik, Nikki Kowalik, Tate Bullinger, Stephanie Stricker, Steve Stricker, Alana Stricker, Jennifer Stricker, and Sarah Stricker.

Special thanks to the Missouri Veterans home in St. James Missouri especially the nurses in B Corp. As John shared often, the only reason he thought anyone should gather at his passing would be for an "Irish Wake". Ever following the Captain's orders, there will be a celebration of life June 17th, 2016 at 3:00 pm- Sunset at the Rolla National Airport.

Memorial Donations may be made to the Missouri Veteran's Home in St. James Missouri or the Shriner's Hospital , cards are available all James & Gahr locations.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 17. 3:00 PM (CT)

Rolla Airport
Vichy, MO

Tribute Wall



“ *John Lewis Wyss*

January 30, 2023 at 04:37 AM



“ *John Lewis Wyss*

January 30, 2023 at 02:54 AM

MB

“ I loved John and so did my husband Rick. I started talking with John back in 1989 when I worked for PaineWebber and he was our customer. We bought stock, sold stock, laughed whether to buy or sell and had many conversations together. I think we talked at least 3-4 times a month every month for a long time.

Rick and I went to Dixon, Missouri to meet John for the first time around 1993. You would have thought we had been close friends forever. We slept in the old farm house and almost froze. The old house was so old and had no insulation but, oh my, what a historical place. John put Rick to work, mending fence for his 300 head of cattle and driving the combine which John figured out real quick that Rick didn't know what he was doing. Of course, John took over.

He was quite a cook. He cooked for us during our stay and also wanted to take us out to dinner. John and Rick would stay up at night and talk about the Bible. He loved to quiz Rick about theology and truths about the Bible. Rick enjoyed those times so much.

We visited him several times at the farm after Konda moved her trailer to the farm. We met her family and visited her several times after the loss of her husband, John. I could give you many stories about our trips to Dixon and we all laughed and laughed and had the best time.

We met Paula later and fell in love with her too. John loved her so and we would visit them in St. James. Paula is a good cook and John loved her meals. She would always cook for us so we could have a nice conversational meal with them. We would always go to the hanger and see the planes and I will never forget the year John took us up in one of the planes. It was fall, the colors across Missouri were just beautiful. I enjoyed that so much, flying with John and talking with the head phones. John and Rick had a special bonding over the years and so did I.

John was a special part of our life, and we will miss him. John, keep

*flying those airplanes in heaven, and we will see you again
someday.*

*Love to Paula and Konda's families from Rick and Melinda
Browning.*

Melinda Browning - May 26, 2016 at 06:41 PM