



Richard Marvin Weeden

July 1, 1932 - May 7, 2024

Brodhead, WI - Richard Marvin Weeden, of Brodhead WI, passed away at age 91 on May 7, 2024, at Pleasant View Nursing Home in Monroe.

Dick was born July 1, 1932 in Beloit, Wis. to Marvin and Bessie (Opsahl) Weeden, the oldest of five kids. His father was a barber on Brook Street in Beloit and he grew up in a large house on Bluff Street along the Rock River.

Dick attended Hackett grade school, Lincoln Junior High School, and Beloit High School, graduating in 1950. He enjoyed playing baseball with friends and cousins, watching his brother Don get in (and out) of an endless series of mishaps, tinkering with cars, listening to Spike Jones, and riding his Whizzer motorbike.

Always fascinated with aviation, Dick joined the U.S. Air Force in 1952 during the Korean Conflict. He served as an Aircraft Instrument Mechanic at Pinecastle Air Force Base in Orlando, FL, working on B-47, F-86, and other top line aircraft of the period. He enjoyed this period of his life immensely and travelled the world on several tours of duty.

At age 16, Dick took his first flying lessons at the South Beloit Airport in a brand new Piper Cub; he eventually obtained his private pilot's certificate in 1976. Dick attended Blackhawk Technical Institute in Janesville, where he

received his Airframe & Powerplant mechanic's license with Inspection Authorization, something that he used daily for the rest of his life.

Dick met his future wife Pauline "Polly" Beischel in 1954 at the North Central Airlines ticket counter at Midway Airport in Chicago. Polly worked there as a ticket agent, and Dick was trying to hitchhike home to Beloit for a visit from Orlando. His last ride dropped him in Chicago, but he knew that North Central had a daily flight to Beloit. A ticket cost \$9.55; Dick had exactly \$10 in his pocket. Chatting over the North Central ticket counter, Dick and Polly discovered they were both from Beloit and even had mutual friends back home. After a long-distance courtship through letters and visits, through moves and deployments, Dick proposed. "I guessed this was love, so I asked her to marry me, and she must have felt the same because she said yes." Dick and Polly were married August 11, 1956 at Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Church in Beloit.

In 1957, the young Mr. & Mrs. Weeden had their first child, Thomas, followed through the next decade by Michael, Mary, James, William, and Patrick. Though reluctant to leave their community in Beloit, Dick and Polly needed a larger home for their young family, and they moved to Brodhead in 1969 – the adopted hometown for which Dick would play a huge part in "putting on the map" in the worldwide aviation community.

Dick worked as a tool & die maker for Warner Electric Brake & Clutch Company in Beloit for 26 years, and for Knight Manufacturing (now Kuhn North America) as a model maker for another 19 years. In 1996 he retired to start his own machine shop in his hangar at the Brodhead Airport, where he continued to make custom parts for customers around the country.

Most of Dick's friends and community knew him through his love of aviation. He was one of the founders of the current Brodhead Airport by organizing a

now-legendary meeting in his living room in 1972 to arrange the airport's purchase and conversion into a shareholder-owned, public-access facility. He was a charter member and served as the first president of Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 431, and was instrumental in organizing the annual fly-in events that take place at the Brodhead Airport to this day. If you have ever enjoyed an event at the Brodhead Airport, you can thank Dick and Polly for getting it all started and making the name Brodhead a familiar one around the world – in aviation circles, at least.

Dick and his family built one of the first modern hangars at the airport in 1974, when he started Weeden Aviation, an aircraft and engine maintenance shop. Though he worked on all kinds of aircraft, his specialty were vintage models. He built and restored numerous aircraft and was especially proud of his scratch-built Pietenpol Air Camper, and his 1935 Rearwin Sportster 7000, which he rebuilt from almost nothing to an award-winning showplane. He gave hundreds of airplane rides over his lifetime, and influenced pilots, mechanics, and restorers from all over the world through both example and encouragement. Old cars and trucks were a later love, and his restored 1949 Chevy Carryall - "just like the one I drove in the Air Force" - was a regular at area car shows.

In retirement, Dick continued to enjoy aviation and the community he found there. Highlights included a trip to Australia in 1996 to visit friends from the international aerobatics team, an Honor Flight to Washington, DC for veterans, annual trips to Oshkosh Airventure, and always the fly-ins at Brodhead Airport.

Richard is survived by his wife of 67 years, Polly Weeden, and children Thomas (Lesa) of Dodgeville, Wis.; Michael (Joanne) of Abilene, Texas; Mary of Verona, Wis.; James (Lisa Braley) of Blanchardville, Wis.; William (Jeni

Shogren) of Albany, Wis.; and Patrick (Tracey Nelson) of Oregon, Wis., plus a large number of grandchildren, great grandchildren, and a wide community of extended family and aviation friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Don (Patricia) and David, and sisters Jeannine (Dan) Johnson and Carol (Paul) Brom, all of Beloit.

A private funeral is being held, with a public celebration of life on Friday, May 17, 2024 at the Kelch Aviation Museum at Brodhead Airport, starting at 12:30 p.m until 3:30 PM. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations for a future memorial at the airport. The DL Newcomer Funeral Home in Brodhead is assisting the family with arrangements.

www.dlnewcomerfuneralhome.com 608-897-2484

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 17. 12:00 PM - 3:30 PM (CT)

Kelch Aviation Museum
N2463 Airport Road
Brodhead, WI 53520

Tribute Wall

JH

“ James H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard Marvin Weeden.

James H. - May 14, 2024 at 06:36 PM

JH

“ Jim Hodgson lit a candle in memory of Richard Marvin Weeden



Jim Hodgson - May 14, 2024 at 06:35 PM

JH

“ John and Tania Haszard purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Richard Marvin Weeden.



John and Tania Haszard - May 14, 2024 at 01:53 PM

JH

“ John and Tania Haszard planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard Marvin Weeden.

John and Tania Haszard - May 14, 2024 at 01:53 PM

SR

“ *Polly and family:
Please accept my sincere condolences.
I didn't know Dick that well, but went to school with a lot of the kids.
What a wonderful story of his life. I knew he was very involved with
the airport, but found the rest of the story very interesting. What a
legacy.
You're all in my thoughts and prayers.*

Sandy Hofmeister Reavis - May 14, 2024 at 01:05 PM

LB

“ *Love, Tom and LaDonna Beischel purchased the
Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of
Richard Marvin Weeden.*



Love, Tom and LaDonna Beischel - May 13, 2024 at 10:08 PM

LL

“ *Leann Looze lit a candle in memory of
Richard Marvin Weeden*



Leann Looze - May 13, 2024 at 08:44 AM

LM

“ *Larry & Mary Malcook lit a candle in memory
of Richard Marvin Weeden*



Larry & Mary Malcook - May 11, 2024 at 10:43 PM

BW

“ *Brenda Wahl lit a candle in memory of Richard Marvin Weeden*



Brenda Wahl - May 11, 2024 at 06:53 AM

DK

“ *Doug And Janice Knight lit a candle in memory of Richard Marvin Weeden*



Doug and Janice Knight - May 10, 2024 at 09:20 PM

SJ

“ *Condolences to the family of a man that seemingly did everything right (at least from my perspective). Being able to refer to that man as MY “Uncle Dick” opened a lot of doors for both Jean and I. We will miss him, and already have.*

Jean and Steve Johnson

Steve Johnson - May 09, 2024 at 04:56 PM

BF

“ *On behalf of the Badger Honor Flight Board and all our volunteers, we extend our deepest condolences to you all, the family of Richard Weeden . We are forever grateful and thankful for Richard's service to our great country. What an honor it was for us to take him on his well-deserved trip of a lifetime. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.*

Badger Honor Flight - May 09, 2024 at 12:54 PM

PL

“ *Phyllis Lentz lit a candle in memory of Richard Marvin Weeden*



Phyllis Lentz - May 09, 2024 at 09:14 AM

DW

“ *Dean And Nancy Walters lit a candle in memory of Richard Marvin Weeden*



Dean and Nancy Walters - May 09, 2024 at 08:27 AM

DK

“ *So sorry for your loss. Dick was such a nice man and a good friend of our Dad.*



Donald Cooley Kids - May 09, 2024 at 06:13 AM

DK

Donald Cooley Kids

Donald Cooley's Kids - May 09, 2024 at 06:13 AM