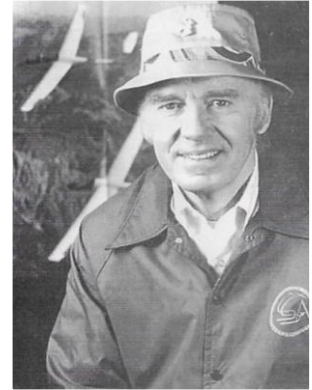


## WILLIAM C. SPROULL (1997)

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Bill Sproull's father was a WW I aviator and journalist who wrote the history of the U.S. Army Air Service in WW I. Bill grew up in Detroit, near Willow Run, so was around many WW II pilots. This exposure, along with reading Terence Horsley's book on soaring flight from cover to cover, inspired him. One day in 1946 when he was in high school, he bicycled or “rode his thumb” out to the airport and had his first glider ride - a winch launch. He knew then that he wanted to fly and he did solo a powered airplane while still in high school. The discovery of sailplanes took a little longer.



He signed up for the Navy just about the time the Korean war was starting. He flew 78 combat missions in PBMs -- long hours, mostly at night and mostly below 1000 feet. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and also received two Air Medals.



Returning to civilian life, he earned a BS in Aeronautical Engineering and an MBA in Business at the University of Michigan. Later he earned a PhD from American University in Washington, DC. He became

Director of Strategic and Business Planning for Honeywell and, later, retired as Corporate Director of Business Development. He then joined the faculty of the graduate program in Management at the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN, teaching business strategy and planning.

While on business travel to Phoenix in 1974, he made his way to Turf Soaring and went for a flight. Fortunately for the SSA business life, he had a soaring flight. His world was changed! He went home and joined the Minnesota Soaring Club and soon became president. He bought a sailplane in partnership with Harry Meline.

In 1982 Brian Utley, the SSA Region 7 Director, moved out of the area and Bill Sproull was elected the SSA Director for that region. Thus began a management career with SSA that was to serve the Society very well during a period when his business expertise was greatly needed.

He served on the SSA Board, both as elected and as Director-at-Large, from 1982 until 2004. He held the office of Vice President and then, from 1988 to 1989, as President. He continued to serve as a Director and Secretary.

This period was a time of transition for SSA as the offices moved from Santa Monica, CA to Hobbs, NM requiring an entirely new staff and associated training. The move went smoothly due to his oversight.

He served on and chaired many committees: SSA Development Board and principal author of the Board's Long Range Strategic Plan; member of the Executive Committee for five years; Chair of Budget and Finance Board; Chair of Planning Board; established the SSA/FAI and Rules Committee; Co-Chair with the Airspace Task Force; Chair of Administrative Board (overseeing five committees).

Bill Sproull served with the SSA Foundation first as Trustee (2006, 2007) and then as advisor (2007-2008).

Bill lent his help to many causes. For example, in 1986 he towed his LS-6 across the country so that Doug Jacobs could fly it in the Hitachi International Masters of Soaring at Minden. As Bill says, "I'd heard Doug Jacobs speak at our Directors meeting after the Worlds in Rieti, and when this came along, I decided this was just something I wanted to do."



Fortunately for SSA, Bill Sproull was the right man in the right place at the right time. He came to the Society at a time of financial decline, membership decline and looming airspace problems. His goals were to develop a responsive and professional staff at Hobbs, improve communications with individuals and groups as well as reverse the membership and financial declines. He reached his goals except for being able to slow only temporarily the rate of membership decline.

Perhaps one of his greatest achievements after his term as President was the development and encouragement of the still active SSA Eagle Fund Program which he started in 1993.

Bill Sproull was awarded the Eaton Trophy in 1992, the Exceptional Service Award in 1988 and 2003. He earned Silver badge #3609 in 1978.