

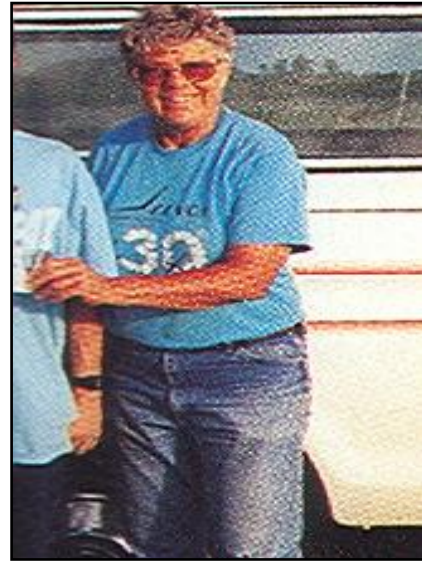
## **PATRICIA HANGE and HARRIET HAMILTON (2003)**

**Harriet (~1920-2005)**

**Pat: (~1930 - )**



**The Tow Pilot  
Harriet Hamilton**



**The Mechanic and Instructor  
Pat Hange**

Harriet Hamilton and Pat Hange – Business partners who created and operated a successful soaring site in Florida – Lenox Flight School. This operation lasted about 40 years. They applied their separate areas of expertise to the operation and became successful in a very difficult business.

They were each inducted into the Soaring Hall of Fame as individuals; however, since they worked so closely together, their story is presented as one biography.

During their time in Florida they battled hurricanes and the vagaries of the aviation economy. But they were doing what they loved. Pat was an ace mechanic with an IA (A&P with Inspection Authorization). She was recognized statewide for her skills in fabric work and aircraft maintenance. Harriet had logged 10,000 flight hours, half of those as an instructor in airplanes, and 43,000 glider tows. The secret to their success, according to Pat, was that they gave each other plenty of space and didn't live together.

The two met in Ohio where Hange, flying a student solo cross-country and scouting for Taylorcraft parts, connected with Hamilton at an airport stop where Hamilton, a former school teacher, was instructing.

Hamilton instructed Hange for her commercial airplane rating and then the two

women headed to Elmira for glider training at the Schweizer factory and departed trailering a newly purchased Schweizer 2-22 trainer. The 13th licensed commercial glider operation began in 1962 when their Lenox Flight School began operation. Drawn to the better year-round weather, they relocated the school to Bartow, FL in 1964 and then opened for business at Arcadia Airport before settling in rural Gardner.

In 2000 Hange, who is also a designated glider examiner, received the FAA's prestigious Charles Taylor Award for her 50 active years as an aviation mechanic. She was the first fully qualified woman to win the award. Learning the ropes as a teen-aged prop girl in Willoughby, Ohio, she worked for Cook Cleland, two-time winner of the Thompson Trophy Race in Cleveland (forerunner of the Reno Air Races). In 1975, Hange and Cleland switched roles when she instructed him for his glider rating. Hange has logged 9,000 hours in gliders and airplanes.

Reminiscing on her aviation career, Hange said, "I was born too early. I'd like to have been a military pilot doing Navy carrier landings. But," she shrugged, "we've had a good life . . . wouldn't change it. Now it is time to retire. The physical work is hard and I'd like to travel more and catch up on life."

Above adapted from *Winter Getaway* by Kathleen Winters in *Woman Pilot* magazine, March/April 2002, page 18.



**Pat Hange receives the  
Charles Taylor Master  
Mechanic Award for 2000**