

BERNARD L. WIGGIN (1977)
(1903-1995)

Bernard L. Wiggin, better known as Barney, served the soaring community for many years as a competition meteorologist, both within the United States and several times as part of the World Team acting both as Manager and Meteorologist.

"Barney" as he was known, was a native of Sanford, Maine. He joined the U.S. Weather Bureau in 1923 and was stationed in Cleveland. Soon, he became the supervising aviation forecaster at the Newark, New Jersey Airport. He then was assigned to the Weather Bureau Headquarters in Washington, D.C. in 1940.



With the outbreak of WW II, he entered the military service and became the commander of a Military Weather Squadron in Australia reaching the rank of Major. He then was assigned to the Washington National Airport. A few years later he was transferred to Buffalo, New York where he was the Chief Meteorologist at the Greater Buffalo International Airport. He remained at this post until his retirement in 1965. He was very popular with the City of Buffalo people and was chosen as one of the top 10 Outstanding Citizens for 1962.

He became interested in motorless flight prior to WW II and was soon the meteorologist at the National Soaring Contests at Harris Hill in 1939, 1940 and 1941 and continued after WW II for a number of years. In those days the weather information available to the public was a lot more limited than now, so that a contest meteorologist was a necessity even more than now. Barney's weather report for each contest day was a complete report of the area's expected weather. He made it educational and encouraged the pilots to be observant and to report back on what they encountered. He made an enjoyable experience by combining a lot of humor. Thus the pilots' briefings were well attended affairs.

The lack of a team weatherman on the first U.S. International Soaring Team in 1952 that competed in Spain, was a severe handicap so Barney was chosen to be the Team Meteorologist for the 1954 Team in England. In the 1956 Team effort in France where Paul B. MacCready won the championship, Barney was the Team Captain as well as

Meteorologist. He served again as the team meteorologist on the 1960 team that competed in Cologne, Germany.

Barney was always ready to respond to a telephone call to give the weather for an award or record attempt, or for one of the smaller meets at Harris Hill such as the Snowbird Meet. He was awarded the Eaton Trophy in 1946 and in 1956 was presented the Meritorious Service Award by the U.S. Department of Commerce for his outstanding work in providing meteorological service for sailplane operations.

His son Dr. Leon Wiggin has been actively soaring for many years and holds a Silver Badge #5098 with Gold and Diamond distance legs. He is a member of the Harris Hill Soaring Corp. as well as the Soaring Society of America. He was the winner of one of the sailplanes that were raffled off for the benefit of the U.S. Soaring Team.

Soaring pilots who flew in those early contests where Barney was the meteorologist have many fond memories of Barney's unforgettable weather reports that were an education to many and a pleasure to all.

Barney received the Warren E. Eaton Memorial Trophy in 1946.