

EDWARD F. BYARS (1992) (1925 -)



Ed Byars loves competition. His first venture into the sport of soaring was in 1955. He soon became President of the Illini Glider Club, and in 1958 entered the 10th Annual Wright Memorial Glider Meet in Richmond, Indiana sponsored by the Soaring Society of Dayton. He flew a Schweizer 1-19 in the Senior Division and placed 18 out of 30. He then moved to South Carolina where, in 1959, he became the SSA State Governor for that state – as well as a professor of Engineering Mechanics at Clemson, SC.

Photo by Alex Aldott

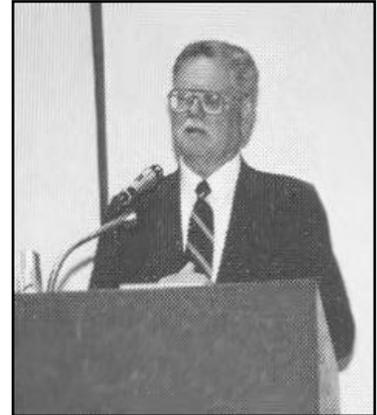
Later when he moved to the University of West Virginia in Morgantown, WV. He would fly his Stagger Wing Beech to the Cumberland Soaring Club operation where he kept his Flying Plank (obviously a pilot who enjoyed special aircraft). About this time he bought a Schweizer 1-23 and started entering Regional contests winning his first in 1962 (winning several more over the years). He also began setting state records. In 1965 he entered the 32nd U.S. National at Adrian, MI with an Austria SH-1 placing 27 out of 69 pilots. He continued to fly Nationals, from Chester, SC to Hobbs, NM and Ionia, MI to Uvalde, TX and more recently, the Seniors in Florida, with such sailplanes as the Kestrel, PIK 20B, LS-3A, LS-4, Discus (A & B), ASW-28.



In 1969 he joined with Bill Holbrook to create the very successful series on Competition Soaring and Cross-Country Soaring, aimed at the serious competition pilot plus those just starting cross-countries. A quote in the beginning of this project expresses their love of competition: “*We believe that the epitome of all soaring is competition soaring.*” Thus, they chose to spread this love to other pilots – including the pilots just starting cross-country. The Symposia have been published in books, audio tapes, and *Cross Country Soaring* as a book. The Competition Symposia have attracted international acclaim and have had a positive effect on competition. In

1975 the Symposia were described as a “*dominant influence for sharing and improving competitive and cross country soaring techniques.*” Additionally, Ed Byars helped to plan and participated in several SSA Conventions from coast to coast.

In 1967 he was appointed as Chair of the SSA Technical Board and served as a Director-at-Large for SSA and later Region 5 Director. In 1985 he joined with competition pilots Holbrook and Striedieck to form the Sailplane Racing Association to lobby for more pilot input to competition rules. In 1992 the SSA Board established the Rules Committee. He became Chair of the SSA Development Board in 1996 and was in charge of the Planned Giving Program of the SSA Eagles Program. He served several years as SSA Vice President, served on the EX COM and became the Chair in 1997 to 1999.



He also began writing articles for *Soaring* magazine (as early as 1965) – many feature articles, other items mostly related to competition and safety. In 2002 he started a column named *The Hangar Flying Project* encouraging pilots to share their interesting, amusing and instructive experiences.

In his past life he was “a University Professor, Researcher, Textbook author, etc.” and had earned degrees in ME, CE, PhD in Engineering Mechanics from the University of Illinois and is a Professor Emeritus from Clemson and West Virginia Universities.

Ed Byars has always shared his love of soaring by encouraging others in cross-country soaring and especially competition. In 1991 he participated in the Women's Seminar at Bermuda High in Chester by flying dual with several of the women participants.



He holds Silver #274 (1957), Gold #203 (1964), Diamond #102 (Int #728, 1969), 1000 K Diploma #34 (Int #134, 1990), Symons One Lennie #257. He was awarded the SSA Exceptional Service Award in 1974 and 1998.

Ed Byars' Kestrel

Photo by Quentin
“Ice” Berg

