

# Denny Martens Inducted into the SD Aviation Hall of Fame

Denny Martens of Vermillion was inducted into the South Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame event on September 12, 2015. The ceremony was held in Black Hills Aero on the Black Hills Airport - Clyde Ice Field, Spearfish, SD.

His nomination letter read:  
After graduation from Canistota High School in May, 1957, he was employed by Hubbard Aviation at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, SD, for two years. He gassed general aviation aircraft and airlines (Western, Braniff, and North Central), and worked in the shop.

He started aviation training in 1957 in Cessna 120s and paid \$8 an hour. He acquired his private and commercial certificates in Sioux Falls.

Denny moved to Vermillion, SD, in April 1959 to work for Duane Gloss, an FBO, and earned his Flight Instructor Rating. Later he got his Instrument, Multi-engine, and Instrument Flight Instructor certificates. In 1985 he got his Airline Transport Rating.

In about 1961 Denny became the manager of the Vermillion Airport. As a fixed base operator, he operated a Part 141 Flight School, an air taxi operation, and aircraft rental business. He purchased a Cessna 172 N6079A for this business and kept it when he sold out. The University of South Dakota was a customer from 1961 to 1967 when he hauled passengers for them besides his regular business.

Denny was activated with the National Guard in 1961 to Fort Riley, KS, and sold his business. He gave flight instruction in Kansas in his spare time and returned to Vermillion in 1962 and bought his FBO busi-

ness back.  
He provided pilot service to USD when they acquired their first aircraft, a Cherokee 6 in 1967. He became a full time employee in 1969 when they purchased a Piper Aztec and flew it 6,000 hours. He then flew their later model Aztec purchased in 1976 for 5,000 hours. Denny flew their Piper Navajo, purchased in 1986, until retirement in October 2002 (another 7,000 hours). USD now have a Beechcraft King Air.

Sometime in the 1970s a South Dakota Flight Instructor's Association was organized. Denny was part of the group for a few years and then was president. He served as president for two years and tried to keep instructors aware of information that was helpful to them. The group later dissolved because it was too costly for members to take time off and fly to the meetings.

In 2001 he purchased a partially finished Midget Mustang and joined The Yankton Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 1029 and also the Tea, SD EAA Chapter 289 to learn as much as he could from others about building an experimental aircraft. He finished the Midget Mustang 7 years later and now flies N608DM and his polished Cessna 172 N6079A. He is presently helping another pilot build a Midget Mustang in Ohio via telephone and email.

He participated in Yankton Regional Aviation Association for several years and served as president for two years. He has given Young Eagle rides for them and flipped pancakes at many "Third Saturday Fly-Ins" for the Tea, SD EAA Chapter 289 breakfasts.

Since retirement he is doing consulting



work and did part time pilot service for USD when needed. He is the manager of the Vermillion Airport again. He stayed active in the promotion of general aviation and still gives flight instruction and flight reviews. Denny has given Ground School Safety Courses for the Yankton Regional Aviation Association for 9 years in Yankton and the surrounding area.

Two friends suggested that Denny join them in having a monthly "Fly-In" supper at the Vermillion Airport on the third Wednesday of each month. This monthly event has continued for several years and when some lost interest, he continued. He comes up with a menu, parks planes, and claims to help solve world problems.

Denny has accumulated about 27,000 hours with 19,000 multi-engine hours, and 8,000 hours single engine hours. Four thou-

sand hours were dual instruction given. He still holds a second class physical.

His flights have been from coast to coast, border to border, and also to Alaska. He still loves to fly!

In 2007 Denny earned the prestigious Wright Brothers "Master Pilot" Award. This award recognizes pilots who have demonstrated professionalism, skill, and aviation expertise by maintaining safe operations for fifty or more years.

He has a wife, Brenda, who is a retired teacher and two children. His daughter, Janice Severson is an RN in Sioux Falls, and his son, Allan, flies for Schwab Financial in Aberdeen. He has 4 grandchildren, two in Sioux Falls, and two in Aberdeen.

Denny was nominated for induction by Roger and Mary Ellen Hutchison of Sioux Falls.

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