



2003 Vintage Hall of Fame

Nick Rezich



Aviation is often a family interest, and that was certainly true on the south side of Chicago, where the Rezich family was living during the golden age of aviation. The boys, Frank, Nick, and Mike, haunted the nearby Chicago Municipal Airport (later Midway Airport) and built rubber-powered models of many of the airplanes of the day.

Nick Rezich soloed a Waco RNF in 1933, at age 14, beginning a lifelong career in—and love of—full-size aviation. He worked for Benny Howard at Howard Aircraft in Chicago, and attained the position of plant manager before being pressed into military service in World War II.

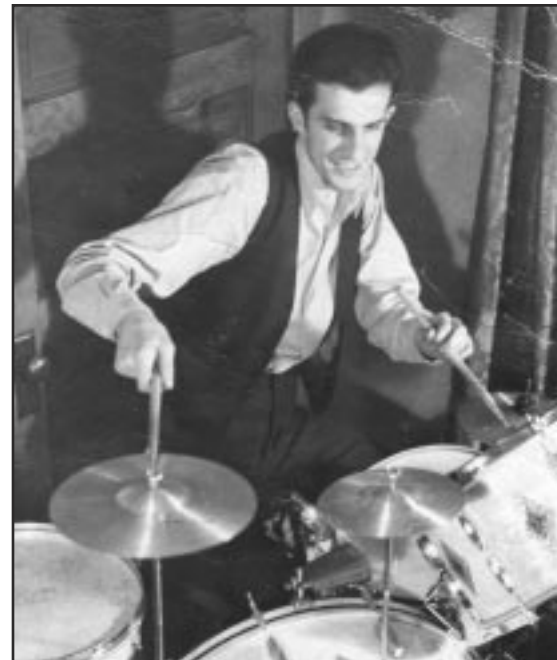
Following the war, he founded

Nick's other passion in life besides airplanes was playing the drums. His role model was Gene Krupa. All the brothers were musically inclined, with Mike playing trumpet and Frank playing the saxophone. In high school, they were known as the "Rezich Orchestra."



The voice of EAA at the 1970 Joliet air show, sponsored by EAA Chapters 15, 101, and 75. The "Voice of EAA" was silenced a decade later in 1981, after a battle with throat cancer.

Nick's love of music helped him when he opened the Pylon Club on 63rd Street on the south side of Chicago. Its aviation décor and proximity to Midway Airport made it a favorite of locals and visiting aviators for nearly a decade after WWII.





Nick and his wife, Joanne, in front of the family Travel Air D-4-D used for Nick's air show act and for skywriting. Joanne and Nick were married in 1950.



Seven-year-old Frank, 10-year-old Nick (mugging for the camera), and 15-year-old Mike Rezich behind the family home on Laflin Avenue in Chicago, circa 1930. The model on the ground in front of the boys is the Spirit of St. Louis.



The very first airplane owned by the Rezich family was this Piper E-2 Cub, which was purchased by Mike and based at the Ashburn airport in 1936. Since 1936, the family has owned 26 different airplanes.



By the time it was possible for Nick to buy an airplane in 1940, World War II was on the horizon. Here's Nick's favorite airplane, his brand-new Culver Cadet at Howell airport. It's blue and silver.

and operated the famous aviation-themed tavern near Midway Airport, the Pylon Club.

With his brother Frank, he designed and built the Rezich Brothers Special, a Goodyear-class racer, in the late 1940s. The airplane would be one of the first donations to the EAA Museum, in Hales Corners.

Nick continued to build on his flying skills, and flew charter for Bluebird Air Service at Midway in various planes, including a Wasp-powered Bellanca and a Lockheed

12. He also did barnstorming with his brothers in the family Travel Air and Pitcairn.

After the war, he also flew for Morton Salt and International Harvester, and began taking on skywriting jobs.

He served as the president of the OX-5 Aviation Pioneers, and Nick (EAA 225) was a strong supporter of EAA during its early days, promoting the organization at the Pylon Club and participating in early fly-ins and air shows. He often flew and announced for free,

since early EAA Chapter budgets were so lean that it was hard to even come up with the funds to buy awards for the participants.

He also used his booming voice over the public address system to describe the maneuvers the pilots were flying, and soon became known as the "Voice of EAA." He was also the master of ceremonies for many of the early EAA evening programs, especially during the Rockford era.

In the early 1950s, Nick moved

continued on page 26

Nick Rezich

continued from page 5


to Rockford, Illinois, just as EAA had done with its fly-in. In Rockford, he flew for many years for the Atwood Vacuum Machine Co. Over the course of his career he flew nearly 35,000 accident-free hours.

He loved to fly for fun, and to

share his love of aviation with young people. One of the youngsters he helped was his son, Jim, who would solo a J-3 at age 16, and move on to both A&P/IA and ATP ratings. Under his father's tutelage, he soloed the family Travel Air D-4000.



The second airplane owned by the brothers was this OX-5 powered Travel Air 2000, NC661H. Frank's in the cockpit. The silver with red trim airplane was bought for \$400 in Washington, D.C., by Mike, and sold in 1942 to the U.S. Navy for use as a training airplane for mechanics. When the Navy was done with it, they put it on a barge and pushed it overboard into Lake Michigan.

Nick helped found EAA's Antique/Classic division in the 1970s, served as its first treasurer, and wrote a monthly column, "Reminiscing With Big Nick," for the magazine. Nick performed roles at EAA continuously from 1956 until the early '80s, when throat cancer finally quieted the "Voice of EAA" in 1981. 

Flight Control Cables Custom Manufactured!



Each Cable is Proof Load Tested and Prestretched for Stability

- *Quick Delivery
- *Reasonable Prices
- *Certification to MIL-T-6117 & MIL-C-5688A
- *1/16" to 1/4"
- *Certified Bulk Cable and Fittings are Available

McFarlane

Aviation Products

McFarlane Aviation, Inc.

696 E. 1700 Road
Baldwin City, KS 66006
800-544-8594

Fax 785-594-3922

www.mcfarlane-aviation.com
sales@mcfarlane-aviation.com



Nick Rezich continued from page 5


to Rockford, Illinois, just as EAA had done with its fly-in. In Rockford, he flew for many years for the Atwood Vacuum Machine Co. Over the course of his career he flew nearly 35,000 accident-free hours.

He loved to fly for fun, and to

share his love of aviation with young people. One of the youngsters he helped was his son, Jim, who would solo a J-3 at age 16, and move on to both A&P/IA and ATP ratings. Under his father's tutelage, he soloed the family Travel Air D-4000.



The second airplane owned by the brothers was this OX-5 powered Travel Air 2000, NC661H. Frank's in the cockpit. The silver with red trim airplane was bought for \$400 in Washington, D.C., by Mike, and sold in 1942 to the U.S. Navy for use as a training airplane for mechanics. When the Navy was done with it, they put it on a barge and pushed it overboard into Lake Michigan.

Nick helped found EAA's Antique/Classic division in the 1970s, served as its first treasurer, and wrote a monthly column, "Reminiscing With Big Nick," for the magazine. Nick performed roles at EAA continuously from 1956 until the early '80s, when throat cancer finally quieted the "Voice of EAA" in 1981. 



*Fly high with a
quality Classic interior*

Complete interior assemblies ready for installation

Custom quality at economical prices.

- Cushion upholstery sets
- Wall panel sets
- Headliners
- Carpet sets
 - Baggage compartment sets
 - Firewall covers
 - Seat slings

Free catalog of complete product line.

Fabric Selection Guide showing actual sample colors and styles of materials: \$3.00.

airtex PRODUCTS, INC.

259 Lower Morrisville Rd., Dept. VA
Fallsington, PA 19054 (215) 295-4115
website: www.airtexinteriors.com
Fax: 800/394-1247



These are the *first* tools you need to buy when you re-cover your airplane. Anyone who has used them will tell you they're the next best thing to having one of our staff right beside you. The **VHS** tape and the **DVD** will give you the Big Picture, and the **manual** will walk you step by step through every part of the process. You're never on your own when you're using Poly-Fiber.

POLY FIBER
Aircraft Coatings

www.polyfiber.com

e-mail: info@polyfiber.com

800-362-3490