

Frank N. Piasecki Historical Marker To Be Unveiled in Philadelphia

On Saturday, April 17, 2010, at 4:00 P.M., an official historical marker by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission will be unveiled to honor Frank Piasecki, a pioneer in the field of vertical flight. It is to be located at 1937 Callowhill Street (between 19th and 20th Streets, behind the Free Library Building on Logan Square) in Philadelphia. The marker's location is at the address of Frank Piasecki's first engineering office.

A dinner at the Philopatrian Literary Society's Stotesbury Mansion, 1923 Walnut Street, will follow the on-street ceremonies, beginning with cocktails at 5:30 P.M. and dinner at 6:30 P.M. Reservations should be made in advance. For information/reservations call 215-627-1391 or e-mail: dziecko2@comcast.net.

Frank Piasecki, the only son of Polish immigrants, Nikodem and Emilia Piasecki, was born in Philadelphia on October 24, 1919. He graduated from Overbrook High School, studied mechanical engineering at the University of Pennsylvania and earned his Bachelor of Science degree from New York University in 1940.

In 1943, Piasecki developed and flew this country's second successful helicopter, and in 1945, invented the world's first successful tandem rotor helicopter. His achievements in the development of rotorcraft technology have made a tremendous impact on present rotary wing aviation. He was also instrumental in facilitating the certification of the Polish Helicopter, W-3 Sokol, by the Federal Aviation Administration, which made this helicopter marketable all over the world.

In the late 1950's, Mr. Piasecki founded the Piasecki Aircraft Corporation and for the next half-century served as the company's Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board.

During his 67-year career, Mr. Piasecki was the recipient of 24 patents and numerous honors for his pioneering work. He was given the nation's highest technical award, the National Medal of Technology, by President Ronald Reagan in 1986, and the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005. Mr. Piasecki was also honored by former Polish President Lech Walesa with the Polish Cross of Merit, one of the nation's highest awards.

Mr. Piasecki served on numerous corporate and charitable boards. He was a director of Crown, Cork and Seal Company (Crown Holdings, Inc.), The American Helicopter Society, The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, The American Helicopter Museum, The Foreign Policy Research Institute, and the Piasecki Foundation.

Always appreciative of his Polish heritage, Mr. Piasecki supported numerous Polish American organizations, including the Polish American Congress, the Polish American Cultural Center Museum, the Polish Heritage Society, the Kosciuszko Foundation, and others.

Frank Piasecki passed away on February 11, 2008 at 88 years of age. Today, his son John manages the Piasecki Aircraft Corporation.

