

In Memory of Captain Rudy Parsons

May 1932–March 5, 2001



The US Airways pilot group and entire aviation community lost a valued friend with the death of Rudy Parsons on March 5, 2001. Rudy was hired with Allegheny in March 1963 and based in DCA until his retirement in December 1991.

Born near Salisbury, MD, in May 1932, Rudy served in Korea from 1953–1954 and in 1958 realized his lifelong dream of obtaining an instrument and commercial rating from Embry-Riddle in MIA. He flew as a crop duster through the Southeast prior to his career at the airline.

Rudy purchased a piece of land in Delmar, DE, and first built a strip, then a hangar, and lastly his airport home. Annual fly-ins at Parsons International became legendary in the 1980s, attended by hundreds of airline and local friends. It was at this strip that Rudy rebuilt a 1941 Stearman, a 1942 Fairchild PT 26, and a 1946 J3 Cub. Many of us “checked out” in his Stearman and were introduced to the world of vintage aircraft at Rudy’s place.

The consummate aviator, Rudy was a true gentleman with a heart as big as the Eastern Shore. He was blessed with a life that allowed him to pursue his passion, but his biggest blessing was “Blondie”—his wife and companion of 16 years who remained literally at his side ’til the end.

Rudy’s funeral was well attended by many US Airways pilots, both active and retired. Captain Joe Kernan provided a poignant eulogy. At the cemetery, services were concluded with a nine-ship “missing man” flyover. The lead biplane returned for a lone wing rock, and I don’t believe there were any dry eyes as we said good-bye to our buddy.

*Chris Polhemus (PIT)
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