

In Memory of Captain Chris Ganas

August 18, 1927–June 19, 2001



I flew with Captain Chris Ganas between 1963 and 1967 after I was hired by Allegheny Airlines. He checked me out as a Captain on the Convair 580 and the "9." The checkouts in those days were quite different from today. Most required maneuvers were quickly completed early on in the checkride, thanks to Captain Ganas' insistence on speeding up the ride. With nothing much left to do for the remaining time, Chris would put the FAA inspector in the left seat for some "stick time" and a bunch of touch-and-gos.

The oral was usually done over a four-drink lunch at a five-star restaurant. The Orbit, Pink, Rum Keg, and Al Mondel's Outer Marker were not five-star rated. Sgro's comes to mind. By the fourth round, the questions and answers were becoming dumber and dumber. We passed!

There was also another side to Captain Ganas' con artist, snow-job personality. Chris felt such warmth for children, especially handicapped children. You had to have been his co-pilot to witness certain acts of kindness that defined this man.

On a flight out of PSB, Chris brought into the cockpit a young boy whose hands were continually shaking. He wore an old-time leather football helmet to protect his head from further injuries. Chris had him read the prestart checklist. He then guided the youngster's shaking hands to the ignition and engine start buttons, and fired off the engine. The youngster quickly leaned out my window and, with a smile of pure delight, watched that mighty Allison turn over that big prop. He started the left engine, and then as best he could, saluted the ramp agent. That was one happy youngster.

On another occasion, we landed in a rainstorm. While sitting at the ramp, Chris jumped out of his seat, saying, "No, no." I followed him out into the driving rain. Chris ran to help a woman who was struggling with a young child who had fallen while holding onto another child. While Chris picked up one child, I grabbed the other one, and we ran up through the air stair door. Chris and I were soaked, and the children were frightened. He took the children into the cockpit and showed them the take-off warning horn, the fire warning buttons, and the rattlesnake (overspeed warning clacker). He then let them start the engines. The kids went running back to their mother, screaming all the way, "We flew the airplane Mommy, we really flew the airplane." The passengers really laughed about that bit of information.

One time, on an early morning business flight from PIT to PHL to BOS, Chris brought a young mentally handicapped shoeshine boy into the galley area. Chris and I got a shine, and then some of the through passengers wanted a shine. The operation was moved onto the jetway, and several boarding passengers stepped out of line to also get a shine. I mentioned to Chris what a nice thing he had done. Well, Chris, with his infamous short temper, launched into a tirade: "I only get 10 percent of his earnings, and I should easily be getting 20 percent. After all, it's my airplane and passengers. The very least that kid should do is give me a free shine." He always wanted you to think the worst of him when you gave him a compliment.

I remember Chris and I helping the agents load baggage to beat an incoming snowstorm. I can still see him walking across the ramp with a few bags of ice for the flight attendants, taking tickets as the F/As were in the cockpit relaxing and eating a hot meal after a long busy day, and working with new-hires getting their 25 hours of observation time.

I am now a licensed captain on a tour boat in the Baltimore and Washington, DC, area. The same lessons about consideration that I learned from Chris have followed me to my new job. Eric, a young boy badly crippled from muscular



dystrophy, steered the boat about Baltimore harbor. His parents couldn't believe that Eric was actually steering the boat and heading where I told him to go. They spent the entire tour videotaping their son at the helm.

A young wife, badly handicapped, needed help getting up the steep and narrow gangplank. Her husband and I helped her by each of us manually lifting one crippled leg after the other.

I received some nice letters when I was flying, and also from my guests on the boats. Every one of those letters has Captain Ganas' fingerprints all over it.

There is a saying, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

Thanks for a great trip, Chris. We will meet later on down the line.

*Don Shipley
Retired*

*In Memory of
Captain Larry E. Henry
March 14, 1940–July 23, 2001*

Buried in the back of my logbook (I still keep one) is a Temporary Airman Certificate. It is for a B-727 type rating. It was issued on December 11, 1991, and is signed by Captain Larry E. Henry (retired AAA). Larry and I were in the last Lake Central Airlines Pilot Class of 7/5/67. Our careers paralleled each other. Larry, along with a number of my classmates, spent a lot of time in the Flight Training Department. I remember the checkride fondly. Larry was making sure I was OK to go in the B-727. He was fair and forthright, always the professional.

One of the joys (and there are) of this job is the wonderful people you meet who share your passion for flight. Larry was one of those people. He is and will be missed.

*Joe Henderson (PHL)
A330*