

New Wood Creek Resident Is World Record Holder

Editor's Note: The Enterprise & Observer columnist from Wood Creek Farms, Anne Phillips, wrote this story about her new neighbor.

By Anne Phillips

We were all happy to have the charming new couple, Betty and Don Frankman, move to Wood Creek and when we saw them mowing and gardening, felt that they, too, enjoyed country living.

Then I learned of the many unusual interests of Betty and Don Frankman.

Betty is outstanding in a field in which I have considerable interest, since I've been an aviator for many years.

But I caught my breath when I learned that Betty soloed at the age of 12. That was in Pensacola, Fla., where she had a first solo as an instructor. Confident that she was ready to solo, she stepped from the plane one day and off Betty flew.

Sixteen is the earliest age at which a pilot's license is issued and Betty was the first American woman to receive one at that age.

SHE WAS a daring young pilot, went in for aerobatic flying and won the Women's International Aerobatic Flying championships in 1946, 1949 and 1950, the only woman in the world to win it three times.

In 1941, flying out of Miami in a Piper Cub, she set an altitude record of 22,763 feet. In 1951, again in a Piper Cub, she reached a new record of 29,050 feet.

It was in 1949 that she flew a P-51 Mustang racing plane over a three-kilometer course at

421.6 mph. This was an unofficial record because on the return flight the plane exploded.

At first, Betty considered balling out, but the plane had sufficient speed to reach a vacant field for a safe landing.

NOT DAUNTED, Betty is the first and only aviator to demonstrate inverted low-altitude ribbon cutting with the wing of her plane -- and that altitude was but 10 feet from the ground.

She became the youngest member of the veteran Air Pilots' Association which requires 10 years as a licensed pilot and 2,500 hours of flying time. This is almost a third of what we have in one whole year.

Betty is also a sky diver and has flown jets, helicopters, blimps and gliders. She has been a test pilot and instructor. With so much time spent in aviation, and I know how many hours of practice it takes to reach such proficiency, it seems hard to believe that this lady has also found time to gather a lot of firsts in the automotive field.

HERE IS THE impressive list:

She is the first and ONLY woman test driver; she is the first and only woman to receive the AAA race-driver's license.

In Sept., 1955 she drove with a team of male drivers to set 395 records in the 14-day stock car endurance run at the Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah. The following February, she set 10 sports car records for speed and acceleration, driving a Corvette at Daytona Beach. In April she set the 24-hour stock car endurance record by driving

with a male team on an oval course at Darlington, S.C., for 2,438 miles in a 1956 Chevrolet.

In October of the same year, she set the Transcontinental Automobile Record, driving a 1957 Chevrolet the 2,913 miles from New York to Los Angeles in 58 hours, 58 minutes.

In Jan., 1959, she established a transcontinental automobile record in South America from Buenos Aires to Valparaiso, Chile, round-trip, non-stop, in 48 hours, 14 minutes. This meant twice across the Andes Mountains, and this she did in a Chevrolet Nomad station wagon.

BETTY HOLDS the following economy records run by the Pure Oil Company at the National Association of Stock Car Safety Trials at Daytona Beach: Class Four - first place (29,493 mpg), third place (22,331 mpg), Class Five - third place (18,571 mpg). In June 1962, she entered the Durability Run from Tijuana, Mexico, to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, the full length

of the Baja Peninsula in a Chevrolet truck.

On Sept. 27, 1965, Betty took a day off to drive Art Arfons' jet car, the "Green Monster Gyrocar" at Bonneville. She captured the World Land speed record for women with a two-way average of 277.62 mph, hit a top speed of 315.72 mph, becoming the first woman to drive over 300 mph, a record still standing.

With all this, Betty also has another life. She is an advertising executive with Campbell-Ewald Co. She has been with the company since 1956 and presently is an account executive for the Chevrolet merchandising department.

AS DIRECTOR of special projects for Chevrolet, Betty has kept in touch with car events around the world and served as the technical liaison-coordinator between the Chevrolet sales and engineering department and the agency on national events, such as the Mobil Economy Run, The Trans-Canada Rally and the Pure Oil Performance Trials.

Betty's activities for other clients included: the coordination of special events or projects, public relations, promotion and creation, presentation and execution of special programs.

Although she has established more aviation and automotive records combined than any other person in history, her

career interests for the past 10 years have been specifically oriented toward the advertising profession. She retired from professional flying in 1953 and automotive test driving in 1956.

Among Betty's many business and professional affiliations is the Women's Advertising Club of Detroit. She was named as one of Detroit's "Top Ten Career Women" in 1964.

ON NEW YEARS' EVE of 1965, Betty was married to Donald Frankman, a commercial television director and producer. Earlier in 1965, Betty and Don wrote, directed and co-produced a color documentary film, "Challenge."

The film was awarded the silver medal for excellence in the category of best industrial film at the New York International Television and Film Festival.

Since their marriage, Don has taken up aviation, has his private license and is now working on his commercial rating.

This interest in flying has led the Frankmans to buy a farm about six miles south of Willow Run which has two landing strips. They are re-building a Pitts special, the plane Betty flew in the 40's which they plan to name "Little Stinker."

They will then build a second one for Don to be called "Little Thumper."

They have plans for sky diving together, too.

RECORD HOLDER — From jets to race cars, Mrs. Donald Frankman of Woodcreek Farms, has been everything from a test pilot to a transcontinental race competitor. She soloed her first plane at the age of 12 and is the first woman to drive over 300 miles an hour, a record which still stands.

Residents Graduate At WMU

Nine Farmington residents were among those awarded degrees at Western Michigan University commencement exercises April 20.

They included Jon Koetger, 34166 Cortland, BA business administration; Gayle Humm, 35530 Lyman Rd., BA; Fred Hyslop, 31013 Shawassaw, BA business administration; Karen Jacobson, 21337 Birchwood, BS and secondary provisional certificate; Larry Miller, 26211 Westwarily, BS engineering; Stephen Yarian, 28410 Alyce Key, BA.

Others were James Stevenson, 31760 Lee Lane, BS and secondary provisional certificate; Jane Uhl, 28750 Bella Vista, BA business administration; and Nancy Weir, 26574 Greythorne Tr., BA and elementary provisional certificate.

Also attending from Farmington will be Mrs. Gayline Beard, Miss Judith Bell, Miss Jean Biddulph, Mrs. Margery Candler, Mrs. Vera Hoekstra, Mrs. Evelyn Jackson, Frank Kasun, Mrs. Renee Kley, Mrs. Karen Milton, Mrs. May Sicilia, Miss Gayle Ulbrich, Mrs. Eve Patterson, Mrs. Ruth Pettegill, Miss Jane Rothfuss, Mrs. Susan Smith, Mrs. Gloria Striewski, Mrs. Connie Wiese and Carl Wilson.

More will be G. Donald Conway, James Weston, Miss Elaine E. Palmer, Miss Marian Berger, Miss Janet L. Dean, Mrs. Mary Jo Tinkham, Mrs. Diane D. Cody, Mrs. Frances M. Copp, Miss Margaret Cottrell, Mrs. Elsa M. Stegenga, Mrs. Irene M. Musch, Mrs. Jean Ralph, Mrs. Eleanor Parker, Miss Donna M. Borus, Mrs. Isabel Leitcher, Mrs. Joyce Ashdown, Mrs. Marvel Eberly, Miss Carolyn Jean Marsh, Bruce Gabel and Mike Rasmussen.

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