



## WWII FEMALE PILOT AND INSTRUCTOR

MEET **ELIZABETH “LIZ” WALL STROHFUS**, CLASS OF 1937. PILOT, INSTRUCTOR, AND STORYTELLER.

### **Elizabeth Wall Strohfus**

(1919-2016)

As part of the graduating class of 1937, it's unlikely Liz Strohfus ever imagined she would fly military aircraft and instruct male cadets in the skill of instrument flight. These critical efforts not only prepared and trained soldiers for war, but freed the male pilots to remain in combat. As she once said, "What I loved was that the planes I flew never asked if you were a man or a woman."

Liz played a central role in lobbying Congress for recognition of WASPs (Women Airforce Service Pilots) as veterans. Later she worked hard to get a bill passed in Congress allowing WASPs to be buried in Arlington Cemetery. She was also awarded the Congressional Gold Medal honoring her service as a WASP. Liz received her second Congressional Gold Medal for her service as a member of the Civil Air Patrol prior to joining the WASP organization.

Within the Faribault community, Liz was active in numerous clubs. Among the many were the Sky Club and Area Pilot's Association. She volunteered in the American Cancer Society, Scouting, P.T.A., Rice County Historical Society, and many more.

Besides her joy of flying, Liz's great delight was storytelling. At the age of seventy, Liz was asked by a teacher to speak to her students about the accomplishments of women in WWII. Liz's life began anew. She spent the rest of her days telling thousands of people her story. Aside from being oral history lessons, these talks were inspirational. She encouraged her audiences, many times made up of students, to work hard toward their dreams. Since that first storytelling, Elizabeth "Betty" Wall Strohfus traveled to more than 31 states relating her remarkable experiences.

Another chapter of Elizabeth's life included volunteering and working for the American Cancer Society. Beginning in 1958, she volunteered in Faribault for an epidemiological study to understand the causes of cancer. Liz was given the opportunity to work on the survey out of the national headquarters of the American Cancer Society as a research consultant. The research continues today.