

the 99 news

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HELP GIVE HOPE



Sandra Lapsley

As a charitable organization, The Ninety-Nines are always on the lookout for worthy, aviation-oriented causes; and the St. Louis based **WINGS OF HOPE** is an airborne humanitarian mission to the forgotten people in the remote corners of the world. Through the media of aircraft and radio communications, the organization brings hope to the sick, injured and starving in areas where help might otherwise arrive too late. Its mission is truly one of life and death. And its continued existence depends solely on the support of organizations such as ours and the tax deductible donations of individuals such as you and me.

WINGS OF HOPE has long been of interest to me, I having written much of its promotional material while in the employ of Tom P. Gordon, one of its staunchest supporters. The organization also enjoys the backing of aviation notables such as George Haddaway, founder and publisher of **FLIGHT** magazine, who recently retired to serve as the organization's full-time board chairman; Max Conrad; astronaut Neil Armstrong; Paul J. Rodgers of Ozark Airlines; Mrs. Henry Timken, Jr.; Robert Chatley of Rockwell International; John C. Mosby of Sky Prints; the Airline Pilots Association; general aviation manufacturers and our own President Pat McEwen. It is indeed a worthwhile charity and one which we hope each Ninety-Nine will support through monetary contributions or the donation of used aircraft and equipment. The ad on our inside back cover has been donated to Wings of Hope by Ninety-Nine News, and we hope you will, in turn, show your support through mailing your contribution to Mr. William D. Edwards, Executive Vice President, Wings of Hope, 2319 Hampton Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63139.

WINGS OF HOPE had its beginnings in 1962, when a missionary named Houlihan, just returned to St. Louis from 20 years of service at a remote medical mission in the Turkhana desert of Kenya, poured out his story of drought, suffering and death to a manufacturer's representative named Bill Edwards.

The mission, at that time, had a Piper Super Cub, donated by two airline pilots and flown by Sister Michael Therese, but it was often inoperable, due to the affinity of hyenas for its fabric covering. The only solution to supplying the area with needed drugs, food and medical care, Houlihan felt, was a metal airplane.

To procure such an aircraft, Houlihan and Edwards enlisted the support of Joe Fabick, a construction equipment distributor, George Haddaway and Paul Rodgers. Fabick laboriously engaged in bartering for, repairing and selling used boats, trucks, cars, generators and airplanes, while Haddaway, Rodgers and Edwards set about creating the legal entity "Wings of Hope".

At last, funds were procured to purchase the specially equipped Cessna Skywagon which Houlihan felt would fill the area's transportation needs. And in April, 1965, the "all-metal miracle", piloted by Max Conrad, was delivered to the Turkhana desert.

Immediately, requests for more miracles began pouring in from all over the world. An aircraft was soon produced for a sponsoring mission in Peru, another for New Guinea, then for Guatemala, Surinam, New Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and the far reaches of Canada and Alaska.

Aviation Law Continued

On the day of the accident, a VFR private pilot with eight years' flying experience had flown from Vero Beach to Pompano in very bad weather, testifying that he had been in and out of showers all the way and flying at about 200 feet AGL. Three other small planes were known to be flying between Pompano and Vero Beach that morning. It appeared that the airports along the way to Richmond were also open, and the Court concluded that although "it may be foolhardy" to take off in such weather, it is not "negligence per se" (that is, the very fact of taking off is PROOF of negligence) to do so. Therefore, even if the plaintiff could PROVE the doctor had been negligent in taking off (which proof was not forthcoming), unless the plaintiff could further prove that any such negligence actually CAUSED the accident, he could not recover.

The Court refused to apply the doctrine of "res ipsa loquitur", as it was applied in the Cheatham case referred to above, saying that "it does not apply. . . where the

Today, **WINGS OF HOPE**, staffed primarily by volunteers, and its planes carry doctors and teachers to all parts of the globe; fly the sick and injured to hospitals and supply food and medicine to people struck by earthquakes, floods and other disasters. More than 95% of the funds donated to the group have gone to supplying aircraft, technical assistance and support. The organization offers its help to any legitimate humanitarian enterprise, without charge, regardless of affiliation.

Emphasis is placed upon supplying the right plane for the mission involved, be it float plane, light twin or utility single. Also, **WINGS OF HOPE** supplies technically trained professionals to fly and maintain the equipment or train others to do so.

As it enters its second decade of service, **WINGS OF HOPE** is reaching for ever further miracles, including the parachuting of emergency aid to those regions where even its aircraft can not penetrate. But the real miracle of **WINGS OF HOPE** lies not so much in its airplanes and equipment; it lies in the fact that a handful of people have had the dedication to turn a single request for a metal airplane into a worldwide humanitarian mission. Won't you, too, lend hope a hand?

evidence fails to supply any proof as to the exact or proximate cause of the accident." In the Cheatham case the wreckage had been found and lack of fuel had been shown, but no PROOF was even given as to the cause of the crash. Here, there was abundant evidence of bad weather but no PROOF that such weather was the cause of the crash. Had this case been in California under the current Cheatham ruling, that Court might very well have found for the plaintiff, the estate of Mr. Kelley, on the basis that planes don't crash, as a general rule, without the negligence of someone. However, here the Court dismissed the case, adding also that the passenger, Mr. Kelley, had sufficient experience with small planes to appreciate the danger of flying in weather conditions such as were present. He voluntarily exposed himself to that danger, thus "assuming the risk", and he would have been precluded from any recovery even if the doctor's negligence had been proven.

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