

LOUISE McPHETRIDGE THADEN

BRIEF OUTLINE: PERSONAL and PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

Personal

- Born, Iris Louise McPhetridge, 12 November 1905, Bentonville, Arkansas: Roy Fry and Edna Hobbs McPhetridge
- University of Arkansas, 1921-26
- Married, 21 July 1928: Herbert von Thaden
- Children: William and Patricia
- Died 9 November 1979

Professional

- J.H. Turner Coal & Building Materials Company, Wichita, Kansas: Sales 1926-27.
- D.C. Warren Company, Oakland, CA (Airplane Distributor): Sales & manager 1928-29
- Pittsburgh Aviation Industries: Public Relations 1930-31
- Penn School of Aeronautics: Director, Women's Division 1930-31
- US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Air Commerce: Developed & organized (with Phoebe Omlie) National Air Marking Program, 1934: initiated program 1935-36
- Beech Aircraft Corporation: Factory Representative 1937-40
- Porterfield Aircraft Company: Factory Representative 1941
- Thaden Engineering Company: Purchasing Agent & Office Manager 1943-48; Research & Development, Reinforced plastics, 1953-54
- Thaden Molding Corporation: Vice President, Director 1955-61
- Thaden Engineering Company: Partner 1961-69; Sole Owner 1969-79

Aviation Records and Races

- **Altitude**, First official altitude record for women in the US , 7 December, 1928; 20,260 feet, Hisso 180 hp Travel Air
- **Solo Duration**, 16 March, 1929; 22 hours, 3 minutes, 28 seconds, Hisso 180 hp Travel Air
- **Speed**, 18 April, 1929; 156 mph, Wright J-5 Travel Air
- Only woman **ever** to hold all 3 records simultaneously (Altitude, Solo Duration & Speed)
- **Winner, first National Woman's Air-Derby**, 18-26 August, 1929; 20:02:02, average speed 135.97, Wright J-5 Travel Air; Santa Monica, CA to Cleveland, OH
- **Refueling Duration**, (with Francis Marsalis) 14-22 August, 1932; 196 hours. Wright J-6, 220 hp Curtiss Thrush, " The Flying Boudoir"
- **Light Plane Speed**, 12 July 1936; 100 km, (109.58 mph), 90 hp Porterfield
- **Winner, Bendix Transcontinental Air Race**, 4 September 1936; First woman to win Bendix, Wright 420 hp Beech Staggerwing C17R; New York to Los Angeles, 14 hrs 55 minutes
- **East-West Speed**, 4 September 1936; New York to Los Angeles; 165.346 mph, Wright 420 hp Beech Staggerwing C17R
- **Inter-City Distance Speed**, 21 January 1937; Beech Staggerwing, Wright 420 hp; Detroit to Akron, 40 minutes 43 seconds
- **100 km Speed**, 29 May 1937, 197.9 mph, Wright 420 hp Beech Staggerwing D17

Aviation History

- 1927 Instruction
- 1928 Solo, (8 February)
- 1928 Federation Aeronautique Internationale Aviators Certificate No. 6850, (28 February) after approximately 5 hrs 15 minutes solo time, signed by Orville Wright
- Transport pilot License No 1943 (4th woman to earn this rating)

Organizations

- Delta Delta Delta (Delta Iota Chapter)
- Ninety-Nines (International Organization of Women Pilots)
 - Founding & Charter Member
 - First *de facto* President 1929-30
 - National Secretary 1930-36
 - Vice President 1934-36
 - Amelia Earhart Scholarship Committee 1960-61
- National Aeronautic Association; National Secretary 1937-38
- Veteran Air Pilots
- American Red Cross Motor Corps 1945-52
- OX5 Pioneers Club of America
- Silver Wings
- Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA)
- US Department of Defense, Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) 1959-61; Executive Committee 1960-61, Information Sub-committee Chairman 1960-61
- Civil Air Patrol 1949-70
 - Lieutenant Colonel
 - Command Pilot
 - Search & Rescue Mission Pilot
 - Cadet Squadron Commander
 - Director of Cadets, Virginia Wing
 - Director of Cadets Squadron, Cadets Middle East Region
 - Coordinator for Women, Middle East Region
 - National Commanders Cadet Committee
 - National Commanders Training Committee Chairman, 1959-63
 - National Scholarships Committee
 - Retired Status 1970
- League of American Pen Women, Honorary Member (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Business & Professional Women, 381st (Vincennes, Indiana)
- Strategic Missile Wing, United States Air Force (Wichita, KS)

Honors and Awards

- Harmon Trophy (Aviatrix) Federation Aeronautique Internationale, 1936, America's Outstanding Female Pilot
- Baltimore Sunday News Outstanding Female Trophy, 1932
- Famous Aviators Wall, Mission Inn, (Riverside, CA)
- Civil Air Patrol: Distinguished Service Award; Exceptional Service Award: Meritorious Service Award with Cluster
- OX5 Club of America, Broadwick Award – Outstanding Aviatrix
- Citation: The Society of Experimental Test Pilots

- Airport: Louise M. Thaden Field, Bentonville, AR
- The Louise M. Thaden Office & Library, Tullahoma, TN, 1974
- OX5 Pioneer Aviators Hall of Fame
- OX5 Silver Wings Achievement Award, 1973
- Arkansas Aviation Hall of Fame, 1980
- First Flight Society Aviation Hall of Fame, Kitty Hawk, NC, 1988
- Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame, 1989
- Recreation flight, 1929 First Women's Air Derby, 60th Anniversary, 1989 Susan Dusenbury, pilot
- Flying helmet taken aboard Atlantis Space Shuttle by Mission Specialist Linda Goodwin, Ph.D., NASA Flight #STS-37, April 5-11, 1991
- Staggerwing Beech Commemorative Tour honoring Louise Thaden, winner of 1936 Bendix Transcontinental Air Race; 60th Anniversary, Aug. 1996
- Award of Achievement, The Ninety-Nines, Inc., July 1997
- The International Aerospace Hall of Fame of the San Diego Aerospace Museum, April 1999
- National Aviation Hall of Fame, Dayton, OH, July 1999
- Women in Aviation, International Pioneer Hall of Fame, March 2000
- Louise Thaden Woman of the Year Award – Annual presentation by Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce at the NW AR Business Women's Conference

Featured:

- United States Women in Aviation 1920-29 (picture on cover), Smithsonian Studies in Air & Space *Number 5
- United States Studies in Women in Aviation 1930-1939 Smithsonian Studies in Air & Space *Number 6
- Included in narrative on Staggerwing Stamp in USPS "Classic American Aircraft" Commemorative Stamp Pane issued July 19, 1997

Listings

- World Who's Who in Commerce and Industry
- Directory or International Biography
- Who's Who of American Women
- Who's Who in the South and Southwest
- Who's Who in Aviation

Sidelines

- Author of book: High, Wide and Frightened, 1938; republished 1973
- Columnist; various newspapers and magazines
- Articles; various newspapers and magazines
- Spokesperson/Model/Endorser for various products

Personal and Professional History Files located at:

National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20650

The Louise M. Thaden Office and Library Building, Staggerwing Museum Foundation, Inc.
PO Box 550, Tullahoma, TN 37388

Headquarters, The Ninety-Nines, Inc., Box 965, Oklahoma City, OK 73159

International Women's Air & Space Museum, Inc., PO Box 465, Centerville, OH 45459

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Patricia Thaden Webb