



Dr. Lewis A. Jackson

Dr. Lewis Jackson impacted countless people through his passion for aviation, education and entrepreneurship.

Born in Angola, IN on Dec. 29, 1912, Dr. Jackson had a passion for aviation from childhood. He learned to fly in the early 1930s and barnstormed across Indiana and Ohio from 1932 to 1939, earning money for college. He earned a bachelor's degree in education from Indiana Wesleyan University in 1939.

The Aviator

Dr. Jackson was captivated by airplanes as a child. By his twenties, he was barnstorming across Indiana and Ohio to earn money for college. In 1939, Jackson earned his commercial license with instructor rating. Within a year he had joined forces with Cornelius Coffey to open Coffey and Jackson Flying School in Chicago on Harlem Field, a segregated airport. He undertook additional training — including aircraft mechanics — at different places around the country. Later that year, Jackson completed advanced aerobatic training and moved to Tuskegee where he received additional aircraft training. Jackson became director of training at the Army Air Force 66th Flight Training Detachment, where, under his guidance, three groups of Tuskegee Airmen ranked first among the 22 schools in the Southeast Army Air Corps Training Command. After the war, Jackson moved to Ohio where he worked as an FAA Flight examiner for 13 years.

The Educator

Dr. Jackson's first teaching experience was in a one-room, eighth-grade school three years before graduating from IWU with a B.S. in Education in 1939. After his stint in the military from 1940-47, Jackson earned a master's degree from Miami (Ohio) University in 1948, and a Ph.D. in Higher Education from Ohio State University in 1950. During his educational career, Jackson held many positions, including Dean of Students, Graduate Dean, Vice President for Administration, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and President of Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio.

The Entrepreneur

Dr. Jackson's passion for innovation surfaced at 17, when he tried to mount a motorcycle engine on a monoplane. Unfortunately, a windstorm destroyed the invention before he could test fly it. In 1974, Jackson fostered the Business Entrepreneur Program at Sinclair Community College (Sinclair, Ohio). Jackson's most creative venture was "An airplane in every garage." From his first test flight in 1956 until his death, he faithfully worked on designing a "roadable" airplane that could be stored at home and towed or driven to the airport. His 16-foot long, collapsible wing design attracted attention from around the world.



Dr. Jackson's legacy lives on. His family made a major donation to Indiana Wesleyan for a library, which bears his name today. Also named for him is the Greene County Lewis A Jackson Regional Airport.