

A Flying Doctor **William F. Blaisdell**

William Frederick Blaisdell, M.D., Seymour, IN, was awarded the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award at a meeting of the Freeman Field Flyers Association in June 2006. Only four persons in Jackson County have received this award.

Dr. Blaisdell learned to fly before going to medical school. He and his wife, **Leanell “Lee” Ellen (Rettinger) Blaisdell**, chose Seymour to begin a medical practice, because of its airport. He flies his own 43-year-old Cessna 310 twin-engine aircraft, saying “Flying is a real privilege. It’s a bug that bites you, and once you start you don’t ever stop.”

Hours of boredom, moments of terror

Lee was given the pilot’s spouse award for supporting his 50-year flying career. “She once told me that flying is hours of boredom punctuated by moments of terror. On one flight our engine failed, and we ended up landing in a swampy area. She married me anyway.”

“I grew up in Blackford County, Indiana, and after finishing high school went to Purdue University, graduating in 1956. I then taught vocational agriculture, chemistry and biology at the high school level.

“During the 1950’s all males incurred a military obligation. I had an Army commission from the ROTC program at Purdue and was on active duty briefly during the years I was teaching. I continued active in the Army Reserves and commanded a reserve unit for several years.

Demeaning the Citizen Soldier

“I must say I am disappointed by the decline in ROTC activity in the country. Apparently many on college campuses fail to understand the huge dangers we face and thus those same groups demean the citizen soldier. An elementary review of the last one hundred years reveals the necessity for military prowess. During that time WWI, WWII, the Korean and Vietnam conflicts took place, and the Cold War was won.

“In no instance did the U.S. fight for conquest of territory. Rather, we fought in defense of our country and for freedom and human rights in the world. We rehabilitated conquered nations and helped them reenter the world of peaceful and progressive nations. Do we have the world’s gratitude? Apparently not — ‘No good deeds go unpunished.’

“In the early 1960’s I entered the Indiana University Medical School and completed my postgraduate medical training at Brooke General Hospital, San

Antonio, TX. The Vietnam War was underway. As is happening now with the Iraq War, the political will to win was flagging. Defeatism was rampant.

Resigns His Army Commission

“It was apparent that victory was unattainable, because of the political climate, even though we had the necessary military resources. Because of the foregoing, I resigned my commission as a captain in the Army and stated that I did not wish to participate in a military that did not have victory as its objective.

“My medical practice has grown from one to seven physicians, two clinical psychologists, and numerous support staff. I continue to practice full time. While certified in Family Medicine, I provide anesthesia service in the hospital operating room and do obstetric practice as well.

Future of primary medical care looks grim

“After forty-some years in medicine the challenges and satisfactions are still there. The future for ‘grass roots’ medicine looks a little grim. Only about one-half of the available residency training spots are being filled in primary care (Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Ob-Gyn).

“The poorer incomes in these areas and greater time demands as well as endless battles with insurers and pharmacy benefit managers are conspiring to reduce the number of young physicians entering primary care specialties. Our medical practice hires two nurses to do one thing: to interface with third party payers and pharmacy managers to attempt to secure for the patients the treatments which have been subscribed!

Benefit of a Capitalist Society

“The pharmaceutical firms are under fire by the political establishment in the country with the aim of ultimately fixing prices. Persons holding that view should consider this: virtually all the additions to the world’s drug therapy in the last hundred years have come from capitalist societies, including the U.S., Japan, France, England and Switzerland. The USSR — when it was intact — did not manage one new drug.”

William Frederick Blaisdell *From: Frank Ray Blaisdell, Frank Adams Blasdel, Leonard Chase Blasdel, Sherwood M. Blasdel, Lt. Enoch Blasdel – (6.228)*