

# The Washington Post

## Malvern J. Gross Jr., accounting executive and record-setting pilot, dies at 77

By Emma Brown

Wednesday, December 8, 2010; 11:21 PM

Malvern J. Gross Jr., an accounting executive and small-plane pilot who set at least two world flight records before serving as president of the National Aviation Association, died Dec. 5 at his home in East Windsor, N.J. He was 77 and had multiple system atrophy, a degenerative neurological disorder.

Mr. Gross lived in the Washington area from the 1970s until the 1990s, when he moved to an island in Puget Sound accessible only by ferry or aircraft.

He had been fascinated by flying since childhood and bought his first plane - a single-engine Cessna 140 - soon after graduating from college. He went on to become an enthusiastic pilot who owned a total of nine airplanes over the course of his life, most recently an experimental light sport plane.

In 1977, he and his son set a transcontinental speed record for a single-propeller plane when they flew from San Francisco to Washington in just over 11 hours. The next year, Mr. Gross set another record for his aircraft weight class when he took off from Gaithersburg and set an altitude record of 9,882 meters, or more than 32,421 feet. Both records have since been broken.

When Mr. Gross retired in 1989 as a partner at the accounting firm now known as PricewaterhouseCoopers, he turned full time to flying. For four years, he served as president of the National Aviation Association, which is the country's official aviation record-keeper and represents the interests of aviators ranging from skydivers to commercial airline pilots.

Mr. Gross also was a member of the board of directors of the Experimental Aircraft Association for more than two decades and served on the boards of the Soaring Society of America, the Balloon Federation of America, the International Aerobatic Club and the United States Parachute Association.

His work was recognized with awards from the Federation Aeronautique Internationale and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Malvern Joseph Gross Jr. was born in Chicago and went by the nickname Mal. He took his first flight at age 6, when his parents sent him alone on a commercial airplane to visit his grandparents in Oregon.

Mr. Gross graduated from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa., then served for two years in the Air Force. Stationed in Maine, he worked as an accountant but used his own plane - a ski-equipped two-seater - for weekend trips.

After his military service, Mr. Gross went to work in New York at what was then Price Waterhouse.

He wrote or co-wrote several books on accounting, including "Financial and Accounting Guide for Not-for-

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Profit Organizations," first published in 1972 and now in its seventh edition.

Last year, he published "Nine Lives: Adventures of a Lucky Pilot," a book recounting several of his near-mishaps in the sky.

Survivors include his wife of 52 years, Inge Stanneck Gross of East Windsor; two children, Randy Gross and Michele Siderius, both of New York; a sister, Linda Sinrod of Mason Neck; and three grandchildren.

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