

ANTHONY J. HICKEY



Tony Hickey

It is with a very heavy heart I must convey the sad news that Tony passed away Wednesday, February 8, 2023 in Calgary after a short but courageous battle with metastatic melanoma cancer which spread to the lung and brain. Tony will be very much missed by his family and the wide communities of aviation fans in Calgary, Canada, Ireland and all around the world who were fortunate enough to have been blessed with his friendship and infectious enthusiast and joie de vivre.

The metastatic melanoma was fast with a vengeance. Always a private person with such matters, Tony did not want the sympathy or attention, and decided to battle his illness in private during the Fall of 2022. He was a fighter right to the end.

Tony's love of aviation started in his schoolboy years on the open air observation decks at Dublin airport in the early/mid 1960s, where he met his first network of close friends, many of whom remained friends for life. The die was cast and Tony would go on to enjoy plane spotting, photography and flying on aircraft for his log book as centre piece passions that would transcend many aspects of his happy and successful life.

Tony settled in Calgary and married wife Barbara (who arrived a bit later) and raised a lovely family with children Claire, Kevin and Sinéad keeping them busy. His passion for aviation led to a long, happy and successful career at the Calgary airport, first working for the ground fuel company and then as the General Manager for one of the main FBO facilities until retirement in 2016.

His cameras were always at his side. From the 1970s, and for four decades, Tony documented the airport's movements on slide film and later video, preserving and sharing a wealth of Canadian and Calgary airport history for enthusiasts far and near. Propliner aircraft from the 1950s and 1960s and British built props and jets were always favourites, as were Canadian aircraft and Canadian based airlines. Tony's excellent photos (many from Calgary) appeared on the pages of NAAN, Aviation Letter, WAF News Monthly, and his beloved Propliner from the 1970s into the 2000s.

The love of flying on aircraft and documenting his journeys in his logbook was a life passion. Tony made trips all around the world over the decades with friends, family and solo, and the next flight possibility was always a happy anticipation. Just a sampling of Tony's flight and trip highlights would include 1990s Yellowknife visits, flights on Buffalo Airways' classic props, VARIG Electras, zip 737s, the LADE Argentina DHC-6 and F27 visit, three trips to North Korea, of course his Air Canada Vanguard flights, DC-3 charters to London/Farnborough in

the early 1960s, float plane trips in Quebec and Manitoba, multiple visits to Hong Kong Kai Tak and China, his Canadian North 737-300 flight YOW-YFB-YOW with pilot son Kevin working the flight, his very numerous Southwest 737 flights .. and many, many more.

Tony's Air Canada Vanguard flights deserve special mention as they cornerstoned his emigration from Ireland to Canada and he planned this move and the flights for many months. Tony flew Air Canada's stand alone DC-8 route from Glasgow to Gander so he could connect to the origin point of the Vanguard flight 511 milk run service. The schedule showed the Vanguard departing Gander at 1045 am and Tony immensely enjoyed 6 legs on the Vanguard that memorable day to Stephenville – Sydney – Halifax – Fredericton – Montreal – Toronto. Tony was shooting 35mm black and white "neggies" as he called them, and soon after his arrival in Calgary he started shooting the more costly Kodachrome colour slide film, which remained his preferred photography medium for 40 years, until he switched focus to video in the early 2000s.

This tribute is written from the perspective of Tony's aviation passion. His professional work accomplishments and friendships would also fill volumes as his positive energy, friendliness, reliability and can-do attitude and capabilities reached generations of people, friends, colleagues and co-workers far and wide.

I first met Tony at a slide show at John Kimberley's Richmond Seafair apartment in the early 1980s. We strategized his late 1980s visit to fly on VARIG's Electras from Rio and what followed was a four decade friendship for which I am eternally grateful and lucky to have had a friend like Tony. Over the decades we made countless aviation trips together all around the world.

We visited each other in Calgary, Vancouver and Yellowknife countless times, and Tony was always a friend who had my back 1000 percent. We shared a zillion laughs if not more! He was a pillar of reason that one could approach for life advice on any topic. He was always a gentleman. And no matter who you were, Tony's advice was always gold standard. Although Tony has departed on his final journey, his massive positive attitude, unwavering friendship, and love of life, family and friends will never be forgotten. May his soul rest in peace.



Funeral service and reception was held in Calgary, Friday, February 17, 2023.

(Written by Henry Tenby)