

Pat Napolitano

April 16, 1965 – May 25, 2018



As an airplane-crazy kid, Pat Napolitano dreamed of a life in flight. And he achieved this dream life – he became a pilot by age 20 and it was blue skies ever after. A fixture at Fresno Chandler Airport, Pat could often be heard proclaiming that he was “...the luckiest person in the world.” Pat’s job as Fleet Service Representative for Mid-Continent Instrument and Avionics afforded him this dream life. Visiting customers and displaying his beloved “Queenie,” a 1941 Beechcraft Staggerwing, at various aviation events kept Pat traveling 30 weeks a year. This meant that Pat was in the sky over 300 hours per year. With his trademark Fedora hat and leather jacket, Pat and Queenie stood out on the ramp wherever they went. And if by chance, you didn’t notice him land, you certainly noticed him after he announced his arrival with an “ooooga” sound of a 1930’s Klaxon horn. He would chalk his cherished Staggerwing on the tarmac with custom made “Queenie” chalks and proudly boast of her uniqueness to onlookers.

Pat had over 5,000 total hours of flight time in his cherished Staggerwing, T-6 aircraft and various other tailwheel airplanes. He earned his commercial rating in 2015 and his IFR rating in March 2016. Pat was an accomplished pilot who flew the best maintained Staggerwing in the country. As an A&P and IA, Pat had tremendous knowledge and passion for aircraft maintenance. He traveled with a large toolbox along with a lightweight collapsible aluminum tow bar which he designed specifically for Queenie.

Pat’s goal was to be an ambassador for aviation and to inspire young people to get into aviation. There are many who can attest to his generosity with plane rides and encouraging words. His generosity didn’t stop at aviation though. Pat was always the first to lend a hand whenever and wherever he was able to. He was a valued Board Member with Central Valley Aviation Association and contributed many hours volunteering at Fly-In’s, chairing committees and generously donating to aviation endeavors. Pat flew Colonel “Bud” Anderson, WWII Triple Ace to an event this past March, where he was being honored, after which Colonel Anderson proclaimed, “Pat can be my wingman any day!”

Pat will be remembered as an excellent pilot, a gregarious, larger-than-life man with a big heart... Mostly he’ll be remembered as a true friend.

Pat’s love of aviation was rivaled only by his love for his family and friends. He leaves behind his companion, Nichole Czaplewski – whose adoration for Pat is a true testament of love... especially considering Pat’s love affair with “Queenie.” Pat is also survived by his lovely daughter, Lena and her husband Chris Lane.

