



**PIPER MEMORIAL AIRPORT
353 PROCTOR STREET
LOCK HAVEN PA 17745**

For Immediate Release:

In Memoriam: Muriel Hykes

**For more information, contact Prof. H. Paul Shuch, Chief Flight Instructor
Office (570) 748-3725, Cell (570) 419-1229, email fly@AvSport.org**

Lock Haven, PA, 28 July 2023 – Piper Memorial Airport pilots, flight students, and aircraft owners who have attended social gatherings at AvSport of Lock Haven over the past fourteen years will probably have met Muriel Hykes, the wife of AvSport’s founder and Chief Flight Instructor. We are saddened to report that she passed away early in the morning of 28 July 2023, following a lengthy battle with congestive heart failure.

Although from a prominent General Aviation family, Muriel was not a pilot. She grew up (quite literally) on the Bloomsburg airport, spending part of her childhood living in an apartment above the Columbia Aviation maintenance hangar. Her uncle, Fred Vedic, operated Columbia and served as airport manager. Her father, Robert Hykes, was chief pilot. Her mother, Joyce Kramer Hykes, and aunt, Janet Kramer Vedic, were the airport secretaries. Her cousins did all the maintenance, and her grandmother, Leerah Kramer, did the rib stitching on the company’s Piper Cubs. Yet, despite this rich pedigree, Muriel was the only member of her family never to pursue an aviation career. Rather, she became a biochemist, with degrees in biology and psychology, as well as teaching credentials and a strong research interest in neuropharmacology.

Muriel was forced by illness to drop out of medical school at LSU Medical Center in New Orleans. Despite this, thanks to the advent of the Internet, she managed to establish herself as an independent science consultant, educational advocate, and practitioner of the alternative healing arts. She often said that if she had been healthier, she would probably have ended up “just another asshole MD-PhD researcher working for Big Pharma.”

When Muriel’s husband, Prof. H. Paul Shuch, retired from a distinguished academic career in 2007, he combined his lifetime of flying with his longtime commitment to education, and founded AvSport, the sport aviation training center in Lock Haven. Although she considered General Aviation primarily a convenient means of transportation between distant points, Muriel spent a good deal of time on the airport, making students and visitors feel comfortable and welcome.

In December of 2021, Muriel was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. She had always been immunocompromised, ever since she had to drop out of med school. But she always toughed it out, always pushed forward, always found a way. This time, her medical needs exceeded her resilience. She spent months in a succession of hospitals and nursing homes, dying just blocks from the airport, at UPMC Lock Haven hospital, at 5:18 AM on 28 July 2023. Paul was sitting by her side, holding her hand, when he heard her last breaths.

A memorial service will be held for Muriel at 10 AM on Sunday, 6 August 2023, at the Allen Redmond Funeral Home, 500 West 4th Street, Williamsport PA.

DOWNLOADABLE PHOTO: <http://avsport.org/photos/obit/Muriel.jpg>