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## **Harold E. Morehouse Flying Pioneers Biographies Collection - Wildman, Francis A. "Doc"**

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ed a home there and had become a partner in a rapidly growing Hupp and Oldsmobile automobile agency. During 1927 he became acquainted with Charles Lindberg at the time the celebrated Spirit of St. Louis was being flight tested, and he assisted with some of this work. Wildman remained with the automobile agency until 1929 when the depression resulted in the loss of his business, with a bad financial loss. He then returned to aviation and in 1930 joined the Engine Research Group of the Power Plant Branch at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio. He remained there until 1939 when he moved back to California where he worked on aircraft inspection at Lockheed Aircraft Corporation and Kinner Rotors until his retirement in 1948. In late 1944 Wildman was awarded a citation by the War Department in recognition of his long and faithful employment following nineteen years of "Exceptional Services." His left leg was amputated in 1949 as an outcome of his 1911 plane crash at Mincola, Long Island.

Wildman joined the Early Birds in 1953, and at that time was living at the Hotel S1 Rey in San Diego. There he passed away on August 13th, 1956 at age 73. He was survived by his former wife, from whom he had been divorced for several years, a son and daughter and one brother. Burial was in Greenlawn Memorial Park, Riverdale, California. Wildman was nicknamed "Doc" during his youth because of a young H. D. who lived with his parents, and this remained with him for the rest of his life.

Flying Pioneer and Early Bird, Francis A. Wildman certainly had a fabulous aviation career. Starting at almost its very beginning, few men contributed more to American aviation history. He devoted his lifetime to its early developments, and as one of the members of that small renowned group who helped Glenn Curtiss to fame and fortune he richly deserves everlasting credit. He was undoubtedly one of the most famous and early instructors and made the statement later in his life that while he did not have a positive total record, he

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