

Daniel and Victoria Wakefield Family Program Endowment

Daniel Louis Wakefield was born October 3, 1913, in Stone Lake, Wisconsin, to Elizabeth (Thibedeau) and Louis Wakefield. As a young boy growing up on a farm in Wisconsin, Dan was inspired to become a pilot as he watched the presidential mail plane fly to President Coolidge's summer White House on the Brule River nearby. He took his first aviation class while in high school in Chicago and went on to attend Hayward Normal College and the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire. In 1934, Dan began his eight and one-half-year grade school-teaching career and subsequent life-long aviation career in northern Wisconsin. He and a partner bought their first plane and commuted

to Minneapolis for flying lessons. Dan earned both commercial and instructor ratings. During WWII, he joined the Naval Reserve and instructed Naval flight students.

After managing airports and flight instructing in eastern Wisconsin, in 1946, Dan, together with his wife Victoria and their four children—Robert, Richard, James, and Tom— moved to Devils Lake. In later years, Vic would say the reason they left a well-established business was because to Dan, the entire state of North Dakota was a runway where a person could land a plane almost anywhere.

In Devils Lake, Dan first worked as airport manager and operator of Lake Region Flying Service. In 1947, he established Wakefield



This endowment was established with a special gift from I. F. LaFleur and Sons, Inc. to celebrate the close relationship their family shared with the Wakefields. As the children grew up across the alley from each other, they bonded and built close, life-long friendships which have withstood the test of time.

Flight Service, a fixed-base operation. He pioneered aerial crop-spraying service in the local and regional farming communities, provided air ambulance service, and flew charter flights and line patrols for utility companies. He established the first aerial applicators school in North Dakota and trained many aerial crop sprayers both in Devils Lake and at South Dakota State University, in conjunction with Texas A&M University. He was a Federal Aviation Designated Examiner and an early supporter of development of the aviation program at UND. Dan received the *Distin-*



guished Service Award from the North Dakota Aviation Operators Association and was inducted into the North Dakota Aviation Hall of Fame in 1998. Dan died October 3, 1995.

Victoria Tressa (Hoffman) Wakefield was born July 7, 1917, in Stanley, Wisconsin, to Catherine (Harding) and Charles Hoffman. Vic graduated from Stanley High School in 1935 and began training as a teacher, earning her Normal School Certificate. In 1936, Vic worked as a practical nurse at Saint Joseph's Hospital in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, where she met her future husband, Dan. Between 1937 and 1941, Vic taught in rural, one-room schools in Stone Lake, Holcombe, Boyd, and Cadott, Wisconsin. In 1940, she earned her diploma from Eau Claire Wisconsin Teachers College.

On November 1, 1941, Dan and Victoria were married at Saint Francis Church in Re-

serve, Wisconsin. Dan's work as an aviation instructor training military flying cadets took them to North Saint Paul, Minnesota, and several towns in western Wisconsin.

In 1946, the Wakefields moved to North Dakota where four more children joined the Wakefield family—William, Daniel, Mary, and Jacqueline.

Vic later continued her education, graduating with a bachelor of science from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire in 1969, with certifications in special and elementary education followed by graduate studies at UND. In addition to pursuing her

college degree during the summers, Vic taught in the Head Start program in Tokio, North Dakota, and at schools in the Devils Lake area, including Saint Joseph Catholic School, Devils Lake Public School, and Fort Totten Community and Four Winds Schools. At the age of ninety-three she returned one last time to read to first-grade children who were being taught by her granddaughter at Sweetwater School. Vic died on September 5, 2014, at her home in Devils Lake.

The Wakefield family cherishes their friends across the Lake Region and appreciates the region's opportunities in education and aviation. The Daniel and Victoria Wakefield Family Program Endowment has been established by I. F. LaFleur and Sons, Inc. to strengthen the Lake Region State College Simulation Technology program. ✈