

Lt Col William E. Hanna Jr. Memorial Flight Scholarship

William E. Hanna, Jr. started his life of service during WWII as a navigator on a US Army Air Force OA-10A "Cat", in the Pacific theater assigned to the Army Air Force Emergency Air Rescue Squadron. These aircraft were better known by their US Navy variation, the PBY Catalina Flying boat. Lt Hanna served for two years flying numerous combat search and rescue missions along with intelligence duties supporting coast watchers and other behind enemy lines personnel. He was an original member of the 3rd Emergency Rescue Squadron and was one of the only original officers still assigned to the squadron when it was deactivated at the end of the war.

He returned to his native Chicago and completed a degree in economics at Bradley University in 1947 as well as a master's degree in economics from George Washington University in 1951. He started his civil service career with the Department of Defense in St Louis in the late 1940's. In the mid 1960's he started work at NASA in the Washington DC area. He was part of the Nuclear Engine for Rocket Vehicle Application (NERVA) program team at the Space Nuclear Propulsion Office (SNPO), a highly classified program (since then declassified) that explored the use of nuclear thermal rockets in the 1960's. He transferred to the Social Security Administration serving as the program manager that introduced computers to the SSA. He retired as a senior executive at SSA in 1981.

Lt Col Hanna, during his time as a public servant was commissioned in the US Air Force, from the Army Air Force when it was created in 1947 and served his country in uniform for 38 years, retiring from the Air Force reserve in 1981. His last tour of duty was as a reservist assigned to the Civil Air Patrol, Middle East Liaison Region. He joined CAP and served in several advisory roles and as the Squadron Commander of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cadet Squadron.

Hanna saw a need in his local community in Rockville, Maryland and served as a City Councilman and as the Mayor of the second largest city in Maryland for four terms. During his time as mayor the city received two All- America City awards, an award given by the National Civic League annually to ten communities in the United States. It recognizes those communities whose citizens work together to identify and tackle community-wide challenges and achieve uncommon results. Following his retirement from the federal government he was elected to serve four terms as a Montgomery County Councilman. Montgomery County is one of the most affluent counties in the United States. It also has the highest percentage (29.2%) of residents over 25 years of age who hold post-graduate degrees. During that time he was selected by his peers as the President of the Council three times.

He was well known as a man of his word and as a man who spoke his mind, a very uncommon thing for a politician. He was an innovator throughout his career. His early adoption of computers and technology brought one of the largest government agencies into the birth of data processing. As a politician he is credited, along with County Executive Charlie Gilcrest, with creation of the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center, a research and industrial park devoted to biomedical and health-care research. "Bill pioneered the County's investment in life sciences which directly led to our preeminent position as one of the world's leading biotech centers," according to County Executive Isiah Leggett (D) in 2011. Following his

death, the Center for Innovation was renamed the William E. Hanna Jr. Center for Innovation to honor his lifelong dedication to innovation in 2012.

He also helped pass a catastrophic health-care insurance package for county employees and was well known as a champion of the arts and affordable housing. Hanna sponsored the county's Moderately Priced Dwelling Units program, which was seen as a national model. The county zoning code was adjusted to permit construction of higher-density — and therefore more profitable — housing, in exchange for an agreement by developers to build a set number of moderately priced units on the same development sites. He sponsored legislation that required art installations in newly constructed public buildings.

He governed from the gut, said former Democratic chairman Mike Gildea in a 1994 interview with The Washington Post. "If there was ever a movie written about Bill, I'd call it 'Basic Instincts.' Many times he was sort of a lone voice out there," according to County Executive Doug Duncan. "He wouldn't go along to get along, he would stand on principle."

Lt Col Hanna and his wife Annette, who like many military wives kept the family strong, had seven daughters, six of them serving as cadets in the Civil Air Patrol. His family, following his example of giving back, has established this flight scholarship for cadets in CAP who have graduated from a national, region, or wing powered flight academy by soloing an aircraft and plan on continuing to serve in an aeronautical field.

Lt Col William E. Hanna Jr's life is a model of the US Air Force's core values: Integrity, Service before self and Excellence in all we do. He served his community, state and nation in times of peace and war. This flight scholarship is focused on providing tomorrow's aeronautical innovator with a start on their career of service.