

Mrs. Blair



Maureen O'Hara Blair was Mrs. Blair at Antilles Air Boats. My interaction with Mrs. Blair was somewhat limited, until I was moved upstairs to be the assistant Director of Maintenance in 1977. I didn't gain this position because of my aviation expertise but rather for the need to have someone sort through the many aircraft records and organize the same. It seemed my organization skills were well received, and I continued to assist in upgrading systems and functions in the maintenance department.



One day while reorganizing the stockroom of aircraft parts, I threw out several old items including a desk chair. After throwing the chair into the dumpster, I returned to my office. As I walked in, my phone rang, and it was Mrs. Blair and she stated "Tom, that was a perfectly good desk chair. Now please take it out of the dumpster and return it to its proper place" ... I responded, "Yes, Mrs. Blair". The twin tower residence sat on the hills well above town, but I knew after my visits to the Blairs home, there was a telescope on a tripod directed to the seaplane ramp below. As I removed the chair from the dumpster, I turned and waved at the house on the hill.

I was still in my twenties and single during this time and Mrs. Blair would also be one to give advice on matters other than seaplane related. It was the motherly advice that I would nod and

reply “Yes, Mrs. Blair”. On more than one occasion, I would see her at the grocery store at Sunny Isle. I would be going down a particular aisle and she would come around the corner towards me. We would exchange hellos and then she would look in my cart and make comments on my purchases. Why am I using this or that? Come with me, let me show you what you should be buying. You could save if you use this. “Yes, Mrs. Blair”. After a while, If I saw her coming, I would dart around the corner to keep her from going through my cart. It wasn’t hard to see her coming. The big hat or kerchief or both, sunglasses, red hair was always the first thing you would see.



I remember another time that had us working together. In January 1978, I joined in on the Governor Cyril King Memorial goose flight. I took several photos, which Mr. Blair took interest in. She looked at the slides and wanted me to send them to Motal Photography Studios in New York for professional conversion for publication. That was the studio that she used for all her photography. When they were returned, she wanted to produce several retail items such as post cards, place mats as well as other items. We would meet at the house on the hill to discuss the possibilities. Other priorities came up which put this little project on hold and after September 2nd of that year things changed dramatically. Mrs. Blair priority was to keep Antilles Air Boats flying.

My interaction continued and certainly increased after Capt. Blairs death with Mrs. Blair’s taking on the role of President. Even though she just lost the love of her life, she showed all the strength of her years and character. She indeed was the President.

Even though AAB was sold in 1981 and I moved to Hawaii 1982, I kept in touch with Mrs. Blair. We would talk from time to time, and I always appreciated the friendship. Maureen O’Hara Blair... Mrs. Blair was a special lady, and I will always have the fondest memories.

Tom Anusewicz