

Ralph Waldo Emerson Cox Jr., DDS, aviation pioneer in Cape May passed away peacefully at age 97 on February 25, 2012. Born December 30, 1914, in Pittsburgh, PA; he attended the University of Pittsburgh and graduated from dental school in 1938. Ralph's dream was to fly aircraft, so he volunteered for the US Army Aviation pilot program. He joined the US Navy and flew anti sub patrols along the US Eastern Seaboard and the coast of Spain. After Ralph's discharge in 1941, he supported the war effort joining American Overseas Airlines and Pan American which flew Sikorsky S44 flying boats. After the war, Ralph formed his own airline company, Ocean Air Tradeways based at NAS Wildwood (now Cape May County Airport). Subsequently, the airline name was changed to US Overseas Airlines (USOA) and became an overhaul base and the largest employer in Cape May County. During its operating history, USOA was a major participant in the Berlin Airlift, Korean Airlift, and special airlift from Guantanamo Bay during the Cuban Missile Crisis. During the 1950's USOA operated scheduled services to the Philippines, Okinawa, the Far East, San Juan, and the Caribbean. USOA was a major developer and pioneer of low-cost coach passenger air service in the US transcontinental market to the islands of Hawaii. In 1964 Ralph opened the Wildwood Canadian Campground near his home in Rio Grande. In the early 1970's Ralph participated in the US Congressional hearings which lead to the enactment of the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978, giving birth to the low-cost airline service that we have today. Ralph is survived by his two children: Maureen Harris and Ralph Waldo Emerson Cox III; his son-in-law Jeffery Harris; and his three grandchildren: Ian & Andrew Harris and Kelly Cox. For more information about Ralph, visit www.flyusoa.com.