

Don Beghin

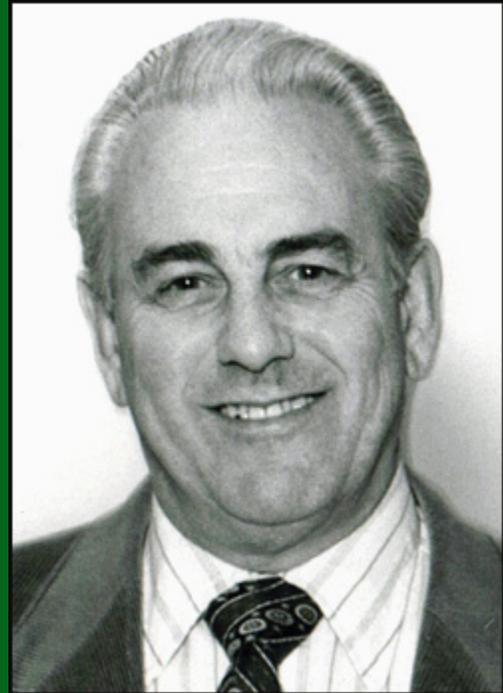
Don was born in Mauston, Wisconsin. At age six his parents moved to a farm near Wisconsin Dells where he attended a one room country school. All eight grades were taught by one teacher.

Don graduated from Wisconsin Dells High School on May 24, 1945 and on May 25th he reported for his pre-induction physical into the Army. After basic training he was assigned to an Ordnance Company in Leghorn, Italy. Don was discharged in 1947 at the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Returning from his military experience he attended the University of Wisconsin and on October 26, 1949 was appointed a Conservation Warden for the then Wisconsin Conservation Department. The law enforcement training at that time consisted of working under the supervision of an experienced Field Warden. Don worked with Field Wardens at Trout Lake, Fond du Lac, Appleton, Mercer, Bayfield and Oconomowoc.

In 1952, he was assigned to the Milwaukee Station. In addition to the Milwaukee Station he worked the South Eastern part of Waukesha County and the North Western part of Racine County. This gave Don a chance to not only work with large numbers of people but to enforce the fish and game laws in a rural setting. By the way, Don was the only Department Employee in Milwaukee County for the five years he was stationed there!

Don married his wife Marian in 1954 and together they had four children, Bradley Donald, Randall Lee, Patricia Ann and Lynn Marie.

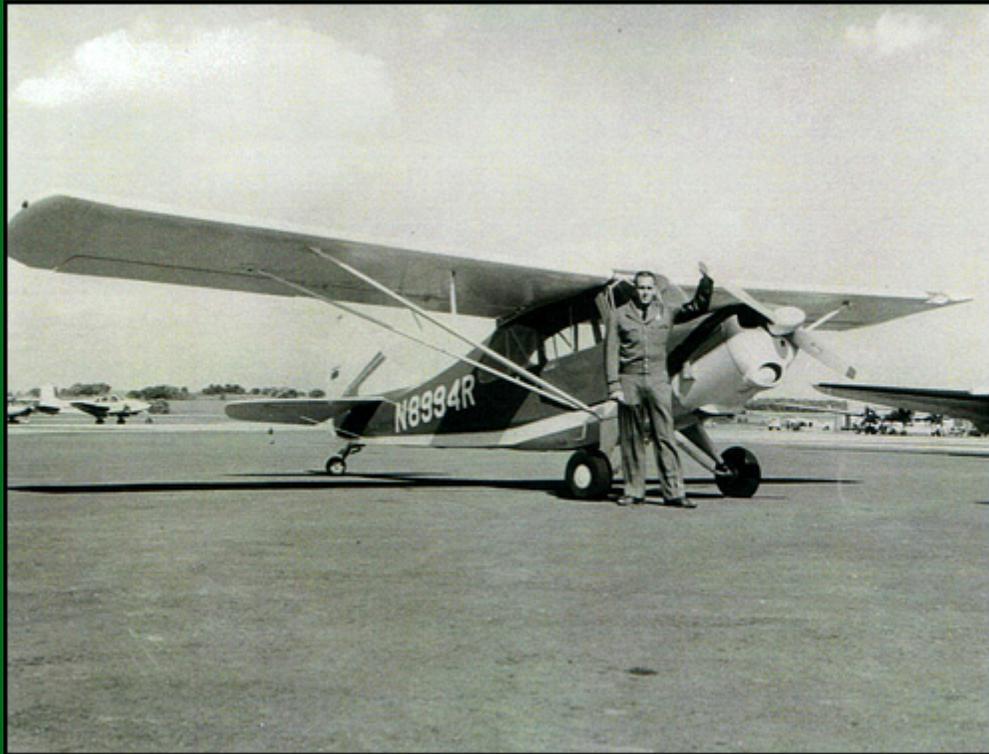




Don transferred to Oconomowoc in 1957 where he had a wide variety of field work. Waukesha County has sixty six named lakes which kept him busy checking fishermen, waterfowl hunters and boaters. Don regularly attended meetings of several Conservation Clubs keeping them up to date on regulations and other Department matters. In 1960 the Department purchased several small aircraft to patrol for boating, pollution and fish and game violations. Don had a Commercial Pilots License and became one of the first Conservation Pilots. Don, Marian and children moved to Madison as the aircraft assigned to him was hangered at Truax Field.

"The gray uniform wardens wear now, was authorized by the Conservation Commission in 1950. By coincidence, the man who is the chief warden today posed for this picture when these uniforms were delivered. He is Don Beghin. Cost was \$150. Wardens were expected to pay \$50 of that amount and the state paid the rest. Thereafter, a \$50 annual uniform allowance was granted".

Local paper circa 1950's.



Truax Field, Madison
1960



Don, front seat pilot, Bill Rollmax, passenger
1960

In 1968 Don was appointed Boating Law Administrator. In this position he developed a boating safety program with assistance from the United States Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Boating Clubs. In 1972 Don was appointed to the National Boating Safety Advisory Council by the United States Coast Guard.

In 1971 Don Received the International Shikar Safair Award for his service in Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement.

In the early seventies snowmobiling became very popular and Don was assigned the task of developin2 a snowmobile safety program. He worked with the University of Wisconsin Agriculture Extension Service, the Snowmobile Safety Council and the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs in the development of this program. Don convinced the then Chief Warden, Walter Zelinske, that the Safety Programs were very important and in order to better foster them a Recreational Safety Specialist should be appointed in each of the Districts. This took place and is in effect to this day!



Don in full uniform at Grandma Beghin's
1980

In January 1974 Don moved to Green Bay as the then Lake Michigan District Law Enforcement Staff Specialist. In this capacity he kept the District Director current on all law enforcement matters and assisted the area and Field Wardens on enforcement problems.

He returned to Madison as Chief Conservation Warden on July 1, 1974. As Chief Warden Don was responsible for the following:

1. Administer the Department's Law Enforcement programs.
2. Supervise and direct Bureau law enforcement officers; establish workloads, priorities and assignments in carrying out the above programs.
3. Assist in preparation of management plans and monitor the effectiveness of Bureau and District law enforcement programs in reaching established goals and objectives.
4. Represent the Department on statewide law enforcement and related matters at various meetings, hearings, etc.



Don retired from the Natural Resources Department on January 31, 1983 after thirty three years of service. Shortly after his retirement Don and Marian purchased a one hundred sixty acre farm in Western Dane County where they still reside. Fishing, hunting, and traveling with their motor home was a large part of their recreational activities. Some foreign travel to England, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Belgium, where Don has living relatives, was also enjoyed.

Retirement Party
1983