

Thomas J. Foerster is inducted into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame in recognition of his service to the Commonwealth, the community, aviation and the Pennsylvania Air National Guard during a distinguished career as a state legislator and Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Allegheny County.

Thomas J. Foerster demonstrated his strong, focused leadership when he served five terms in the Pennsylvania General Assembly from 1958 through 1967. He sponsored several important pieces of legislation that have had lasting impacts on all Pennsylvanians. His legislative leadership in the areas of conservation and education included sponsorship of Clean Streams and Mine Subsidence legislation, as well as legislation relating to Community Colleges and the University of Pittsburgh.

Mr. Foerster's outstanding performance as a legislator was only to be eclipsed by his distinguished career as a county commission. As a member and the chairman of the Allegheny County Commissioners, Thomas Foerster worked diligently to improve the lives of county residents. His numerous accomplishments have included expansion of the community college, improved care for children and senior citizens, and programs for the mentally ill, the retarded and the poor. He also spearheaded regional projects concentrating on expansion of the industrial base to create jobs.

Mr. Foerster's crowning achievement, and the one with the most direct impacts on the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. From his first term as a commissioner, he had the foresight and vision to support acquisition of lands adjacent to the airport to support long-term airport modernization efforts. Today, the new airport is the third largest in the United States. This airport, shaped in no small measure by Thomas Foerster's vision, stands ready to serve the region, the Commonwealth, and the Pennsylvania Air National Guard well into the 21st Century.

When the Pennsylvania Air National Guard faced the challenge of converting the 112 Tactical Fighter Group from A-7 fighters to KC-135 tanker aircraft, Thomas Foerster stood ready to help. Without hesitation, he championed the Air Guard's need for airport acreage to support construction of a new ramp and related support facilities. AS a result of his vigorous and deep personal support of the units' mission, the Pennsylvania Air National Guard was able to acquire the lands needed to allow military construction to go forward on a timely basis. Mr. Foerster's action exemplified the cooperation between the community and the Guard that contributed immeasurably to the Air Guard's strength and readiness.

The singularly distinctive accomplishments of Thomas J. Foerster as a leader in the civilian community reflect great credit upon himself and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and contributed directly to the success of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard at Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. The civil service of Thomas J. Foerster truly warrants his induction into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame.