



J.H. "Stormy" Mangham

STORMY PLAZA



Clara Fay & Stormy Mangham

Welcome to Stormy Plaza named in honor of James Harold "Stormy" Mangham. He was the owner of Mangham Airport, which operated from 1954 to 1986 and was located just west of this plaza. The airport, with its three original runways, was just east of the Home Town Lakes and Walker's Creek Hike and Bike Trail. The airport headquarters and Mr. Mangham's residence were located in the northwest part of the airport just south of present day Mid Cities Boulevard.



A remnant of the Mangham family homestead is this stone fence once framing the driveway of their property. This view is from Cardinal Lane looking south with Walker Creek Elementary School in the background.

James Harold "Stormy" Mangham (1906-1974) was a man born for adventure. As a teen, he spent much of his time racing motorcycles. He was dubbed "Stormy" by local elders due to the clouds of dust that followed him everywhere he would go. Stormy's father was concerned about his well-being and told Stormy that he would give him eight hundred dollars to buy a World War I Jenny plane to fly if he would stop racing motorcycles. Stormy bought the plane at the request of his father and quit racing, although he did continue to ride. He was taught to fly at age nineteen by Earl Rockwood, flying a World War I Jenny out of Meacham Airfield with very little instruction. By the time he was twenty-one years old, he landed a job flying an illuminated sign for Mrs. Baird's Bakery, and also flew for the Internal Revenue Service to spot stills from the air during Prohibition. In 1928, he began working with Texas Air Transport, the forerunner of American Airlines, and flew for American until he retired in 1966.



In 1932, Stormy bought sixty acres of land to pasture his horses, which eventually became the north portion of the airport. In 1938, he designed and built his home in the shape of an airplane and moved in with his wife Clara Fay, his son Charles and daughter Nancy Jane. The only remnant of the family homestead is a handcrafted stone fence located on Cardinal Lane between Mid Cities Boulevard and Hawk Avenue. In 1946 Stormy purchased an additional one hundred acres of land just south of the original tract. It wasn't until 1954 that Stormy Mangham opened the private airfield on his land. Originally, the airport had three sod runways. Eventually, only one runway remained in operation, but this north to south runway had power lines on the south end that plagued pilots.

Mangham Airport was a commercial operation, but more importantly, a place for Stormy to store his airplanes. Stormy and Clara's son, Charles, was the airport manager and, like both his parents, he also flew planes. Hangers were built for a hundred planes and sometimes twice those numbers were on hand. Airplane and helicopter pilots trained on a 2,500-foot asphalt landing strip and could obtain ratings in various types of craft. Senator and astronaut John Glenn landed at Mangham Airport when he was asked to speak at Tarrant County Junior College. The airport closed around 1986 when the land was purchased by E-Systems for development. Stormy's airfield produced local activity that was instrumental in helping to spark the growth and development of North Richland Hills.



Speck Hardy & Stormy Mangham



The Mangham Residence



Stormy on an Ercoupe in 1958

Stormy Mangham had many passions other than flying. His need for speed and love of streamline motorcycles led to his design of a 1955 single engine Triumph Twin, named *The Devil's Arrow*. Stormy turned to friends Jack Wilson for tuning and Johnny Allen to drive the two-wheeler. In 1955, the team of Stormy, Jack and Johnny set the World's Motorcycle Speed Record racing at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. The Devil's Arrow set the first record at 191.08 MPH in September and then again in November, renamed the *Texas Ceegar*, at a blistering 214.17 MPH. Stormy also had a passion for sailing. He and Charles built a forty two foot trimaran. He sailed during his retirement years in the Gulf of Mexico.

After suffering a heart attack while flying his plane to the coast, Stormy Mangham crashed and passed away in 1974 near Luling, Texas. However, his legend lives on in the racing world, the airline industry, with his loving family and here in Stormy Plaza.

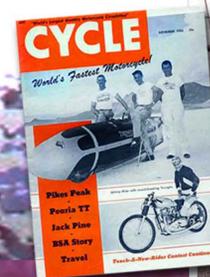
The name "Stormy Plaza" also complements the theme of the twenty foot tall public art piece by Barbara Grygutis commissioned by the City. The glass and steel sculpture is titled *Weather*. Ms. Grygutis designed the work of art to "invoke the many thoughts and feelings associated with the variety of weather patterns in this geographic region and the influence they exert on our daily lives." Barbara Grygutis is a nationally acclaimed sculptor specializing in large-scale, public art projects. She has completed works in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Bellevue, Washington; Phoenix, Arizona; Santa Clara, California; Washington, D.C.; and many other locations in the United States and Canada.



Aerial of Mangham Airport



Looking west toward the Mangham homestead from present-day Hawk Avenue.



The note says, "Howdy Old Folks wish you had been with us, this motor cycle I call it, turned 191.87 MPH at Bonneville Utah Sept. 2, 1955 for the world's fastest two wheeler. Best wishes, Stormy".