



## Clifton A. Moore: 1922-2002 He Was "Mr. Airport"

Clifton A. Moore, nicknamed "Mr. Airport" for his leadership in civil aviation both in Southern California and around the world, served for 25 years as executive director of Los Angeles' vast four-airport system.

Moore is best remembered for construction of the present-day Los Angeles International Airport—first bringing a two-runway airport into the "Jet Age" during the early 1960s. "Clif was a teacher. He led by example, and a lot of us are the better for it," recalls one airline executive. "He was ahead of his time," the executive noted. Lydia H. Kennard, current executive director, said, "As 'Mr. Airport' in Southern California from the Sixties to the Nineties, Clif Moore recognized better than anyone the importance of an airport system to the City and the region. He worked tirelessly to ensure Los Angeles became the premier West Coast international air gateway."

Moore set a course of service early in life. Graduating high school at 17 during the Great Depression, he was offered a scholarship to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology because of his mathematical and engineering abilities. But the brilliant teenager declined because his family needed his income from work. Instead, in 1940, he took a seaman's entrance exam for the U.S. Navy. He was one of two accepted out of 200 examinees in those tight-budgeted, pre-war years.

Assigned to the USS Warden, Moore was among a handful of crew members aboard the destroyer at anchor in Pearl Harbor on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. Raked by gunfire and dodging Japanese bombs, Moore and his shipmates raised steam and guided the ship out of the harbor, the first of the fleet to reach the ocean's safety.

Four years of harrowing sea duty followed—the North Atlantic, Santa Cruz and Marcus Islands, Bougainville, the Marshalls, the Philippines and Leyte Gulf. When Moore was awarded his Chief Electrician's stripes at age 20, he was the youngest chief petty officer in U.S. Navy history.

Following discharge, Moore took an electrician's job with the City of Los Angeles. One of his first assignments was to reinstall the Lindbergh Beacon (named after famed aviator Charles Lindbergh) on top of City Hall, where it had directed pilots to the airport from 1928 to 1941, when it was removed because of World War II.

Moore's wide and voracious reading, his skills and talents led to promotions. He began at the airport in 1959 when he paid a \$3 fee, won a competitive exam, and was hired as a building superintendent. He soon assumed additional duties as administrator for the construction of what would become LAX, helping to transform a two-runway regional airport into one of the world's busiest airports.

Moore became deputy general manager of the Department of Airports in 1966, then advanced to executive director in 1968, in charge of operations at LAX and those of the three other airports in the department's system: Van Nuys, Ontario International and Palmdale Regional. He retired in 1993.

Moore helped form some of the world's most prestigious airport organizations. He served two terms as president of the International Civil Airports Association and was president of Airport Operators Council International (now Airports Council International). He was on the State of California Commission on Aviation and Airports and served on the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Task Force on Airport and Airspace Congestion.

Moore served on numerous Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) task forces. He was awarded the FAA's Award for Extraordinary Service, the highest honor bestowed to men and women outside the federal agency, for his pioneering work in managing and mitigating airport noise between Los Angeles' airport facilities and their neighboring communities. He also received a special commendation from the FAA for his contributions to international air transport.

Moore received the first annual USO General James H. (Jimmy) Doolittle Award for service to aviation and the encouragement of air travel. The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce presented him their highest honor for contributions to world trade.

During the dramatic days of World War II, Clif Moore married Betty. Their more than 60-year marriage produced three children and six grandchildren. Clif Moore died in April 2002, at the age of 80.

At Moore's 1993 retirement ceremony, former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley said, "In every position he has held within the City of Los Angeles, Clif Moore has left his indelible mark for excellence and innovation."