

## IA: Aviation Legend Earl Johnson of Newton Passes Away

MAY 1, 2017 **SOURCE:** MCCLATCHY

April 30--Newton resident and aviation legend Earl Johnson passed away early Saturday morning at the age of 91.

Johnson established the airport fixed-based operator business, Johnson Aviation in October 1949. It was previously known as Smith Aviation. Through this endeavor, Johnson helped grow, change and develop high standards in the aviation industry in central Iowa.

The Newton resident filled a variety of positions in aviation throughout his career. He served as an aircraft dealer, charter pilot, corporate pilot, airport manager, flight instructor and pilot examiner.

In 2015, Johnson, who was the manager of the airport in Newton, was honored by the city with a name change of the airport to Newton Municipal Airport -- Earl Johnson Field.

Earlier this month, the Newton resident was recognized by Park Centre after he led the residents of the senior living community through a tour of the airport. The organization celebrated his impact on the airfield nearly 60 years later and presented Johnson a trophy.

Johnson was also honored in 2015 as a Hero of Industry and Technology by the Transportation Heroes Center, Iowa Transportation Museum. He was also named a Pioneer in the Fixed-Base Operator Industry in 2014 by the Iowa Aviation Museum in Greenfield.

The Newton resident served the U.S. Navy for three years and moved to the area from Monmouth, Ill.

He spent his later years sharing his love for aviation by enjoying a session of "hanger talk" every Tuesday afternoon at the airfield.

---

\_\_\_ (c)2017 the Newton Daily News (Newton, Iowa) Visit the Newton Daily News (Newton, Iowa) at [www.newtondailynews.com](http://www.newtondailynews.com) Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.