



Alaska State Legislature

1974

Source:

SCR 3

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 3

Paying tribute to the memory of Bernt Balchen.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS the members of the Alaska Legislature have learned with great regret of the death of Colonel Bernt Balchen, U.S.A.F. (Retired), October 17, 1973; and

WHEREAS Colonel Balchen -- renowned as a skilled, versatile aviator in the Arctic and Antarctic -- was the first pilot to fly over both the North and the South Poles as chief pilot for numerous polar expeditions; and

WHEREAS, a native of Norway, Colonel Balchen helped supply the Norwegian underground during the Second World War; he carried out hazardous rescue missions first in command of U.S. Air Force rescue services in Greenland, then flew highly unorthodox, wave-level shuttles between Scotland and neutral Sweden, evacuating both American airmen and fellow Norwegians; and

WHEREAS in 1946 Colonel Balchen became President of Norwegian Airlines, parent company of the present-day Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS), and in 1948 he was recalled to active duty with the U.S. Air Force and named commanding officer of the 10th Rescue Squadron in Alaska where he applied the techniques he had perfected in polar, trans-Atlantic and World War II flying achievements; and

WHEREAS, repeatedly honored by the aviation world, only recently Colonel Balchen was elected to the Canadian Air Hall of Fame -- the only non-Canadian ever to be so honored -- and he was

scheduled to be inducted into the American Air Hall of Fame in December, 1973 at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature of the State of Alaska that its members, in expressing their sorrow at the passing of this pre-eminent airman, acknowledge with deep and abiding appreciation Colonel Bernt Balchen's distinguished contribution to the science of aviation and to the development of air rescue services and techniques applicable to Arctic flying so essential to those who now and in the future will fly the skies of the 49th state.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to Colonel Balchen's widow, Mrs. Audrey Schipper Balchen of Cappaqua, New York; and to his sons, Bernt Balchen, Jr. of Oslo, Norway, and Lauritz Balchen of McLean, Virginia.

10400