

Thank You, Frank Jensen, Industry Leader

Dedication and Remembrance

On February 8, Frank L. Jensen, Jr. was still hard at work wrapping up business on the final day of HELI-EXPO 2005 in Anaheim, California. HAI's past President (1982 - 1998) was a dynamo of leadership, enthusiasm, determination, and advocacy, and had not missed a HELI-EXPO in two decades. There was work to do, and Frank was there to get it done. For his efforts and accomplishments over the years, Frank had received numerous accolades from both the military and civilian arenas. This time around, he was co-honored with the Eagle Award from HAI, along with Special Advisor Tim Biddle and Special Advisor Emeritus Ted Dumont.

A mover and a shaker all his professional life, people knew they could count on Frank, and he never let them down. So the news of Frank's passing away just four days later came as a shock.

To the civil helicopter industry, he was the ardent supporter and tireless advocate. To many aviation-related organizations, he was a venerable leader and source of inspiration. To his family, he was the devoted patriarch. Here at HAI headquarters, we have lost our President Emeritus, our former leader, and a dear friend; one who guided and grew our association from a small endeavor striving for relevancy to a significant voice in the halls of power.

Frank's biography is as impressive as it is extensive. Along with serving as Executive Director and then President of HAI for 16 years, he was founder and Secretary of Helicopter Foundation International; president of the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the Army Aviation Association of America; president of the Aero Club of Washington; and Executive Director of the Tour Operators Program of Safety. Before joining

HAI, he was Chairman and CEO of the Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics (RTCA), during which time he received awards and citations from the European Organization for Civil Electronics, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and many others. He was a highly decorated military veteran, serving in both the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army. He conceived the idea of an International Federation of Helicopter Associations with observer status at ICAO. This became reality in 1998.



Frank Jensen
1928-2005

Frank possessed an extraordinary business aviation acumen that served the industry well. He received a Master's Degree in Aerospace Operations Management from the University of Southern California, Pentagon Branch. As a rotary and fixed-wing commercial-rated pilot, along with experience as an aircraft maintenance supervisor, his ratings and credentials firmly enhanced his reputation as a force to be reckoned with. Captains of industry, executives and managers, elected politicians, and government regulators sought and respected his opinions and guidance. Frank plotted the course, and others followed. That defines leadership, and Frank was a leader.

He was named Elder Statesman of Aviation by the National Aeronautics Association, and was designated a Fellow of the

American Helicopter Society. He received the Lawrence D. Bell Memorial Award from HAI and the Paul Tissandier Diploma from the Federation Aeronautique Internationale.

Frank did not know everyone and not everyone knew him; it just seemed that way. For almost two decades, Frank was the go-to guy on just about every issue affecting the civil helicopter industry, ensuring a balance between the needs of business, the desires of the community, and the burdens of regulations.

The path of progress, of course, was not always smooth, and never easy. Many of our members probably remember the tough times: that recessionary period in the early 1980s when HAI faced, and conquered, monumental economic challenges, including its own survival. Frank, along with elected association leaders of the period - Gian Blower, Loran Patterson, and Charles Johnson - instituted strategic guidelines and made the difficult decisions necessary to get the association back on sound financial footing. Their efforts were rewarded with unalloyed success. Frank Jensen took the helm of a tiny, economically precarious trade association in leased quarters with an annual budget of \$250,000 and a staff of a dozen, and left us with a fiscally strong, 33-person staff organization that owns its office building and operates with a \$4.8 million budget. Along the way, new member services were generated, the award-winning *Helicopter Annual*, *ROTOR* magazine, *Operations Update*, *Maintenance Update*, and *PARs* began publication, and HAI became recognized as "the voice of the civil helicopter industry."

The challenges inherent in representing such a diverse industry

are formidable, and Frank met those challenges head-on. His commitment to the industry's success was contagious and compelling, encouraging HAI Members and staff to follow his lead in addressing and resolving arduous issues. Frank never rested on his laurels; his intensity for success never diminished.

Among his many successes is HAI's signature Fly Neighborly program. Recognizing that the copious benefits of helicopters — e.g., news gathering, emergency transport, high-speed chase surveillance, law enforcement, saving a life - are not readily considered by those on the ground who are affected by the transitory noise, this program, now in its third decade, encourages new technology and recommends quieter operating procedures to lessen the noise impact. The program has gained broad support among helicopter operators, manufacturers, government agencies, and communities, because it tangibly demonstrates the industry's commitment to being a good neighbor. The Fly Neighborly program is a key element in garnering public acceptance of helicopter operations; clearly one of Frank's goals.

Safety has always been at the forefront of HAI's concerns, as reflected in its mission statement. Frank was proud of the industry's safety record, but never satisfied. He knew helicopters were safe and that the statistics proved it, but understood that we could never be complacent. One of the many safety-related programs implemented on Frank's watch was the Maintenance Malfunction Information Report, or MMIR. This program, which began as a joint FAA/HAI project, has evolved considerably over the years and continues to serve the aviation community, and offers operators a way to save time and effort when filling out warranty claims and service difficulty reports. More importantly, MMIR provides a

means for all operators to research parts failure information, and therefore identify potential problems before they become accident statistics. MMIR has many success stories, and it remains a free service to this day.

A fierce advocate of business, probably his most publicly visible accomplishment was arguing successfully for using the private sector to remove and reinstall the Freedom Statue atop the U.S. Capitol, back in 1993. At the time, there was much hubbub about the National Guard using one of their Chinooks to perform the work. Frank, through numerous media appearances, consultation with key politicians and congressional staffers, and a myriad of bureaucratic hurdles, successfully managed to convince decision makers that "this was clearly a job for the private sector." In October 1993, HAI member company Erickson Air-Crane completed the job at a tremendous savings to the taxpayer, using a trademark, ultra-conspicuous, orange S-64.

Frank's dedication and commitment to the civil helicopter industry were rewarded when the HAI Board of Directors agreed to change his position title from "Executive Director" to "President." He was proud to have earned their confidence, and was given a fairly free hand to run the association, within certain guidelines.

In each edition of the *Helicopter Annual*, HAI's president pens a column that reflects on the occurrences of the previous year, and provides commentary on the issues facing our industry. Frank's final "President's Message" appeared in the 1998 *Helicopter Annual*. Reading it today, the topic of his article is enduring in its relevancy: our industry is stronger when we are unified. In leading HAI so auspiciously for so many years, he demonstrated that even a small association, if it is well-managed and has continuous involvement from its members, can be a powerful partner for business. Today's

leadership and members work hard to continue and promote that philosophy. HAI is extremely privileged to have known Frank Jensen; our industry is even more fortunate to have had him as our leader and friend.

In 2004, Frank celebrated his 50th Anniversary with his wife, Leda. Along with his wife, he is survived by two sisters and a brother, five children, twelve grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

His son, Frank Lloyd Jensen, provided HAI with a quotation by Charles Swindoll that captures Frank's philosophy: "The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life...The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our Attitudes!"

A memorial service was held on February 19 at St. Francis of Assisi Parish near Frank's home in Triangle, Virginia. Family, friends, colleagues, and associates gathered on the cold winter day to pay respects to the aviation icon who impacted their lives on so many levels. In a dramatic tribute, helicopters from longtime HAI Member AGROTORS, Inc., flew in formation at the end of the service. One cannot help but smile to realize that Frank would certainly have appreciated the gesture, then would have instructed everyone to get back to work.

HAI President Roy Resavage noted, "Frank devoted a very large portion of his life to HAI and the helicopter industry, and we all owe a great amount of gratitude to his untiring efforts. Frank will be missed by all of us." 