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AEA Board of Directors Announce Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient

Award Presented to Bob Carpenter at AEA Convention Opening

Past Recipients of the AEA Lifetime Achievement Award:

2008

Tom Sternig
President, Aircraft Electronics Ltd.

Paul Brenner
President, Flight Components

Bruce Baxter
Partner, Chapman Avionics

2007
Monte Mitchell
Past President, AEA

2006
John Winter
Founder, Mid-Continent Instruments Co.

2005
Jack Grose
President, Navair Ltd.

2004
Gary Burrell
Co-Founder, Garmin International

2003
George Lewison
Aviation Engineer, Author

2002
Edward King Jr.
Founder, King Radio

2001
Robert Kauffman
Founder, Electrosonics

With a membership of more than 1,300 companies from around the world, this year's AEA International Convention & Trade Show in Dallas, Texas, is where "avionics excellence awaits."

This morning, Robert "Bob" Carpenter was recognized for his consistent excellence in the avionics industry when he was named the recipient of the 2009 AEA Lifetime Achievement Award during the convention's Official Opening Ceremonies.

ROBERT CARPENTER

Carpenter Avionics, Smyrna, Tenn.

Born in 1934, in Graniteville, S.C., Robert "Bob" Carpenter spent his childhood exploring, fishing and building model airplanes. Carpenter became interested in flying, earning his own money to pay for flying lessons at age 15.

He was a leader in high school, serving as class officer in the student council. He also was selected to attend Boy's State, and in 1952, he graduated as valedictorian of his class.

During his sophomore year at Clemson College, Carpenter joined the U.S. Air Force, eventually teaching engines and airframes on C-54 and C-124 cargo aircraft and the B-47 bomber stationed in Amarillo, Texas.

After leaving the Air Force in 1958, he worked for Tradewind Airport Corp. in Amarillo.

Carpenter started in the maintenance department, then transferred to the radio shop.

After marrying and starting a family, Carpenter went to work for Bill

Quimby, then manager of H&H Aviation

in Columbia, S.C. In 1974, moving the family to Augusta, Ga., Carpenter took a position at Capital Aviation. In the early 1980s, Dean Dhom, manager of Capital Avionics at the time, offered Carpenter a chance to start his own avionics shop next to Dhom's fixed base operation in Nashville, Tenn. Soon after the move, with the help of Dhom and Johnny Davis of Dallas Avionics, Carpenter opened his shop in Nashville, and Carpenter Avionics was born.

Carpenter served as the bench man, installer, and manager, while his wife, Fran, served as secretary, receptionist, parts inventory and accounts payable. One month after opening, Pete Pedersen, a previous employee from H&H Aviation, joined Carpenter, helping him build the business.

After 12 years, Carpenter was forced to find a new home for his business. As a result, the Carpenters moved to Smyrna, Tenn., to work beside Corporate Flight Management, a maintenance facility.

Today, Carpenter Avionics has 22 employees and has received national awards and recognition for its work and exemplary customer service. Carpenter also has received recognition from the aviation community, from his peers, pilots and vendors. In 1986, he was chosen Bendix's Man of the Year. In 1990, his fellow AEA members honored Carpenter as the Member of the Year. And, in 2006, he received the Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Elected twice to serve as an international officer in the AEA, as secretary, then as treasurer, Carpenter participated with the AEA in the successful effort to lobby Congress for the General Aviation Revitalization Act of 1994. He has spent countless hours volunteering for the Association and has attended nearly every regional meeting and annual convention.

Today, Carpenter focuses on family time, including with his two children, Beth and David, and four grandchildren. □

