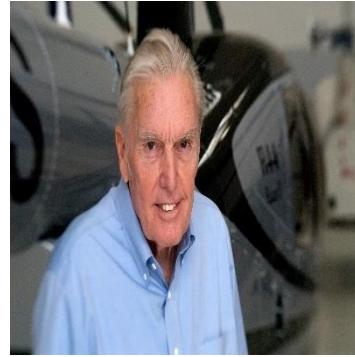


Daniel Guggenheim Medal

MEDALIST FOR 2012

For conception, design, and manufacture of a family of quiet, affordable, reliable, and versatile helicopters.



FRANK D. ROBINSON

Frank Robinson was born in Washington State, the youngest of four children. He grew up in a small town during the Depression and worked his way through college. He aimed his education specifically at helicopter design, receiving his BSME degree from the University of Washington in 1957, with graduate work in aeronautical engineering at the University of Wichita.

Robinson began his career in 1957 at Cessna Aircraft Company working on the CH-1 Skyhook four-place helicopter. After 3 1/2 years at Cessna, he spent one year at Umbaugh on the certification of its gyroplane and 4 1/2 years at McCulloch Motor Company doing design studies on inexpensive rotorcraft. Robinson then worked at Kaman Aircraft for one year on gyrodyne-type rotorcraft, followed by two years in R&D at Bell Helicopter where he earned a reputation as a “tail rotor expert.” In 1969, he moved to Hughes Helicopter Company to work on a variety of R&D projects, including a new tail rotor for the Hughes 500 helicopter and work on the “quiet helicopter” program.

Unable to interest any of his employers in his own concept for a small, low-cost helicopter, Robinson resigned from Hughes in 1973 and founded Robinson Helicopter Company (RHC). RHC’s first business address was Robinson’s home where the two-seat R22 helicopter was designed. The first R22 prototype was built in a tin hanger at the Torrance Airport, and Robinson himself flew it on its first flight in August 1975. After 3 1/2 years of testing and technical analysis, the R22 received its FAA Type Certificate in 1979. The first production R22 was delivered in late 1979, and the R22 soon became the world’s top selling civil helicopter. In addition, the R22 holds most world records in its weight class including speed and altitude.

In the mid-1980s, Robinson and his staff of engineers began development of the four-seat R44 helicopter, which he flew on its first flight in March of 1990. FAA certification was received in late 1992, and production deliveries began in 1993. By early 2007, more than 3,000 R44 helicopters had been delivered to over 70 countries, with the R44 becoming even more popular than the two-seat R22. Since 1987, RHC has produced more civil helicopters than any other manufacturer. As President and Chairman of RHC, Robinson oversees a staff of approximately

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1,200 production and management employees. Engineering, design, and development remain Robinson's primary interests, although other management responsibilities consume much of his time.

Robinson is an experienced helicopter pilot and flies the R22 and R44 helicopters regularly for personal and business purposes, including experimental test flying. He is a full member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots and a Fellow of the American Helicopter Society. His accomplishments have been recognized with numerous, prestigious awards and honors presented to him by a variety of different organizations.

Having achieved some success, Robinson donated \$1 million to the University of Washington for an endowed tuition scholarship fund based on financial need for students graduating from South Whidbey High School, where he grew up, and another \$1 million for students majoring in engineering. He also donated \$1 million to the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum and another million to the American Helicopter Museum in Westchester, Pennsylvania.

Robinson remains active in his company and continues to refine the R22 and R44 to enhance performance and reduce maintenance requirements. Recent improvements include the more powerful, fuel-injected R44 Raven II. Today, Robinson oversees the company's development of its first turbine helicopter, the five-place R66. The R66 made its first flight on 07 November 2007, and is currently undergoing FAA type certification.