

Daniel Guggenheim Medal

MEDALIST FOR 1990

For outstanding engineering achievement, management and leadership in the innovative development of three generations of commercial jet aircraft—in particular the 747—and his contribution to the enhancement of safety in air and space.



JOSEPH F. SUTTER

As a native Washingtonian, Joe Sutter graduated from the University of Washington in 1943 as an Aeronautical Engineer; thus he naturally would go to Boeing to set his career. After 41 years he retired, to leave behind a legacy of new-generation airliners.

He joined Boeing as an aerodynamicist, and became chief aerodynamicist on the Model 367-80, a prototype of the first U.S. jet transport—the Boeing 707. He became the chief of technology on the Boeing 727, and later the Chief Engineer-Technology for the Commercial Aircraft Division. For Boeing's biggest financial commitment, the 747, he became Chief Engineer in 1965, and was given overall charge of the division in 1971.

As executive vice president, he was responsible for all engineering and new product development, the job he held until he retired.

The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) awarded Sutter the Aircraft Design Award—the first such award by the AIAA—for his contribution as chief designer on the 747. Among the many other awards and honors bestowed upon him was that of Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society of England. For his role in the development of three generations of airline jet aircraft, he was awarded the U.S. National Medal of Technology by the President. His technical leadership and management skills were recognized by his receipt of the Wright Brother's Memorial Trophy from National Aeronautic Association in 1986.

During his long career, he was a positive proponent of safety in all aspects of aircraft design, construction and flight; his dedication led to his chairmanship of the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel, set up by Congress to advise the NASA Administrator on safety matters. Sutter also served on the Rogers Commission, investigating the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster.

He often is referred to as the "father of the 747."

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