

Progress report, July 2023.

Friday July 14th was a very special day for the foundation. We started with a luncheon that included 2 very special guests. The first being Mrs. Bill Lear Jr. (Brenda) who has contributed very generously to the foundation and the second being Mr. Don Grommesh. Don (badge #8) started his career with Lear Jet on July 17, 1962. He went to Geneva, Switzerland to work for Bill Lear at what was to become the Swiss American Aviation Corporation (SAAC) as Chief Structures Engineer. There he helped design what became the Model 23. He spent most of his career in engineering, becoming Vice President of Engineering in 1971 then Vice President of Research & Development. During Don's career he oversaw the design and development of Lear Jet Models 23, 24, 25, 35/36, 28/29, 55, 31 and 60.



CLJF Luncheon 7/14/2023, L to R: Jay Thomas, Bill Kinkaid, Don Grommesh, Brenda Lear, Ron Forshee, Rick Rowe & Dick Kovich

Later that afternoon we had more special guests including Clay “Mr. Learjet” Lacy, Lynn Krogh – Pilot and CEO of International Jet, Scott Patterson – pilot, Emma Pham - personal assistant to Mr. Lacy. and Brenda Lear. Mr. Lacy is an icon of the industry. He was a close personal friend of Bill Lear, landed the first Lear Jet in Los Angeles, was the first Lear Jet west coast sales manager and held several world records in Lear Jets. Mr. Lacy was responsible for introducing numerous Hollywood personalities to the Lear Jet. The foundation is very grateful for his visit.



Mr. Lacy in the cabin of Lear Jet 23-003

After a personal inspection of the aircraft the foundation discussed our mission, goals, and vision for the aircraft with Mr. Lacy. We wish to thank Tonya Sudduth and Jeff Gordon of Bombardier for providing transportation and facilities for this event.

We also continue to work towards our goal of restoring and operating the world’s first purpose-built business jet. In the last several weeks we have continued to lay the foundation for our fundraising activity. We have conducted an in-depth interview with a national aviation magazine, held several additional aircraft viewings and are preparing ourselves for on-line merchandise sales. Additionally, we are deep into the planning of Lear Jet first flight 60th anniversary events which will be held on October 7th.

Meet Board Member Bill Kinkaid



I hired into Learjet, then Gates Learjet, straight out of A & P school in 1980. I always loved airplanes and figured I should make my interests my career. A couple of things happened just after I hired in that really got me thinking about staying there. The first was a ride in a model 25, oh what an impression that made! The second was seeing Learjet 28-003 sitting on the ramp. It was the first time I had ever seen a winglet and it was the most beautiful aircraft I have ever seen. Neal Armstrong was on the board of directors, I got to meet him. Later I learned he held several world records in a Learjet 28.

I stayed at Learjet for almost my entire career with only 2 small breaks of service. Learjet gave me the kind of aviation career that I couldn't have gotten anywhere else. Thanks to my employment at Lear, I have been able to knock out most of my bucket list, see a lot of the world, live for several years in Europe, and represent the FAA for the past 28 years. The latter opened doors that I would never have thought possible including participating in several type certification programs, certifying individual aircraft, and delivering aircraft to the customer. All told, I was directly involved in the last 1300 aircraft or about a third of the production run. That's a lot of awesome airplanes. The other draw was the incredible history of the company. There are few stories like it. A classic David – vs - Goliath story of one man's total dedication to achieving a goal despite the nay sayers. An entire industry was created as the result.

I believe that all Lear Jets/Learjets are classic aircraft, especially the early examples. I got involved in this project because this aircraft needed to come home again. Back home to Wichita Kansas. It just couldn't be allowed to sit in Florida rotting away, waiting for the next hurricane to wipe it out. That part of our story is now a success, the aircraft is in the right place with the right people. We will have many more successes in the future.

Bill is a current Bombardier Employee and is the President of the Foundation.

Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Mandy Chiu, Mandy donates many hours of her time to the foundation and acts as the unofficial stenographer of the board of directors.



If you had asked the young Mandy what types of job she would be doing or where would she be in 20 years, I am sure her answer would not have been, "In Wichita, KS and working as an Aircraft Systems/Certification Engineer."

I was born in Taipei, Taiwan and developed a curious soul at a young age. I have no recollection, but according to my father, I was a kid who would tear apart an alarm clock just to see how it works. My favorite toy growing up was a yellow Power Ranger, and I also loved Mazinger Z. (Robots and cars are just too cool, I mean... who likes Barbies as a toy when you can't even bend their elbows?). I have always known that I wanted to be an engineer, as that curiosity stayed with me until today - especially toward mechanical designs. It amazes me how a simple linkage or a gear is designed to make things happen, or to prevent things from happening. Studying Mechanical Engineering then working in the automotive industry was my college goal until I ended up in an industry, I wasn't even aware of back then - the Aerospace industry.

After grad school I started my first aerospace job working at Sino Swearingen in San Antonio, Texas. The cultural difference and language barrier certainly made it hard in the beginning. The acronyms people throw at each other in the meetings, the complexity of each system, the massive part numbers from engineering and manufacturing bills of material, supply chain challenges, production, and manpower constraints - it truly takes a variety of talents and knowledge to build an aircraft. I quickly noticed that everyone was proud of working in this industry, as we should be.

The aircraft industry which includes design, certification, and manufacturing, is probably one of the best industries I could've asked for to satisfy my curious mind. I had the chance to meet many great people during the Learjet 85 program. The volunteer work with the CLJF to restore the first purpose built and delivered business jet is not simply about giving back to the community, it grants me the opportunity to learn from board members and volunteers from different fields. I get to step out of my comfort zone to interact and be involved in new activities, and to learn and be part of preserving the history of Learjet and aviation. It makes me feel more connected to the industry and motivated every time I see the passion sparked in people's eyes by bringing the L23-003 one step closer to being flight-worthy. I can't wait for that day to come, and I treasure every step with the team working together toward that goal.

Classic Lear Jet Foundation is a non-profit IRS 501(c)(3) corporation. Donors can deduct contributions they make to CLJF under IRC Section 170. Donate at <https://ClassicLear.org>.

Just how serious are we about this airplane?

Lear Jet 23-003 has been in a corrosive environment for 25 plus years, although we have not performed the necessary inspections on the structure (X-Ray & visual) we highly suspect there is serious corrosion going on meaning we might need to replace a wing skin or two. Recently Bombardier needed to clear ramp space at the Wichita BAS service center. In another example of The Classic Lear Jet Foundation and Bombardier working together they offered the wing jig to us just in case we needed it. The Wing Final Assembly jig had been stored in this location since the end of Model 60 production in 2013. It's a huge piece of tooling weighing in at some 22,000 lbs. and is in 3 pieces. On April 14th the wing jig was moved to a more suitable storage area. This move was financed by Belger Cartage via an in-kind donation to the Classic Lear Jet Foundation. Thank you Belger!



About Belger Cartage

Since 1919, Belger has led the crane service industry with a rich history of innovation and foresight. Headquartered in Kansas City, MO with locations throughout the Midwest, Belger provides crane services, machinery installation and de-installation, specialized heavy hauling, and warehousing to customers in a wide range of industries throughout the country. "...Better Call Belger" has become a well-recognized phrase used when a job is difficult or challenging, demanding the highest quality service, performance, and experience.



Classic Lear Jet Foundation is a non-profit IRS 501(c)(3) corporation. Donors can deduct contributions they make to CLJF under IRC Section 170. Donate at <https://ClassicLear.org>.