

Dr. Don Richardson Biography

Dr. Don Richardson joined AIAA (then the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences) in 1948 as a student member while attending Georgia Tech and completing his initial degree, a B.S. in aeronautical engineering. Having served during WWII as an infantry sergeant in Italy, the G.I. Bill enabled his bachelor's degree and his private pilot's license—both of which served him well in his lifelong career in the aerospace industry. Early on, he was an aerodynamics engineer with assignments during the development of the Chase Aircraft XC-123A—the first U.S. designed jet transport—and as the lead aerodynamics engineer on the X-18 tilt-wing experimental aircraft. After 10 years with Hughes Aircraft, Don started his own aviation research company in 1969, which he heads to this day, specializing in air traffic control. A commercial pilot with instrument, multi-engine and seaplane ratings, Don has been a subject research pilot in seven FAA operational flight test experiments. His primary contributions as an engineering manager, research pilot, and pilot psychologist, plus his dedication to the AIAA, led to his election as President of AIAA in 2004-2005. He was elected as an AIAA Honorary Fellow in 2009, and elected as an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society in 2016. He was also awarded the NASA Public Service Medal in 2002.