



HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

VALLEY OF THE GIANTS

"When I want to understand what is happening today or try to decide what will happen tomorrow, I LOOK BACK."

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

KENTON W. ZAHRT
Civil Service (Ret.)
Chief Technology
Coupling Directorate
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Ken earned an MSE, an MBA, and graduated from the Armed Forces Industrial College. He is a registered PE. He is active in the Engineers Club, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, National Society of Professional Engineers, American Society of Cybernetics, World Future Society and Founding Chairman Honor Seminars of Dayton. He has authored forty-five technical reports.

Ken Zahrt has always demonstrated a broad multidisciplinary conceptual thinking approach to problem solving during his thirty-year career in the Air Force. The magnitude of his work was so significant the Air Force awarded him the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal. His work was also recognized and accepted by the highly respected Scientific Advisor to the President of the United States.

Ken Zahrt was 36 years old when the Air Force placed him on a career path that provided the opportunity to fully develop his gifted talents. This new job, Asst. Chief Plans Office, Directorate of Research, Wright Air Development Center, was the first in a series of ever increasing responsibilities. Ken had the fundamental responsibility for maintaining the Air Force as the dominant player in aeronautical systems research and development.

This giant conceived, formulated, and implemented a new pioneering process which searched basic and exploratory research projects throughout the world. This process analyzed the results of each project and selectively identified the new technology and novel concepts which had the greatest impact on future aeronautical systems.

With this technology in hand he developed very unique management procedures to assure the earliest integration of science into weapon systems planning. This process became widely known in the Air Force and the international aviation community as TECHNOLOGY FOR TOMORROW (T2).

The T2 process was a major benefit for advanced weapon system plan-

ning. It permitted the aircraft designer to postulate and conduct preliminary design studies on significantly advanced vehicles and their flight envelopes using the unique research data Ken had identified.

The new vehicle concepts were then presented through the T2 process to the Laboratory scientists. Ken's presentation in the Laboratory would always contain a challenge to move the research program to greater heights and to structure the research so that it provided data that could be immediately used by the aircraft designer.

Ken Zahrt was the advocate, the mentor, and most importantly the single interface between Laboratory programs and the advanced aircraft designers in the Air Force. Ken was the glue between the two major forces—science and engineering. He did not manage the Laboratory research or design the advanced weapon system but he brought them together with such skill and understanding that the Air Force stayed on the cutting edge of manned flight. His understanding of these diverse technical areas was so complete he could advocate for either the research project or vehicle development in a time of budget distress. He discussed Technology Forecasting while the majority of the aviation community was struggling to understand the basic principles.

The majority of the aircraft and spacecraft flying today have their genesis in the TECHNOLOGY FOR TOMORROW program.