

## FATA ENTREPRENEURIAL EXCELLENCE HALL OF FAME RECIPIENT

JUNE 12, 2007



### GARY WILLIAM JONES

Gary William Jones was born in Sarasota on February 3, 1952. He attended Bay Haven School, Sarasota Junior High School and was graduated from Sarasota High School in 1970. He began his aviation career working for his father's FBO, J & J Aircraft, on the flight line and as a helper in maintenance while in high school. It was here that his father, Clyde, continued the lessons & examples of honesty and integrity that had begun in the Jones home.

One night, after high school, while servicing a National Airlines B-727, Gary was struck by a runaway baggage cart. He received cuts, bruises, and a broken pelvis. Gary used the settlement from the accident to pay for his education at his beloved Florida State University. Completing a degree in Advertising in 1975, he returned to work with his father at Jones Aviation Service.

Jones Aviation was formed by Clyde Jones in 1971 to manage 19 T-hangars at the request of the Airport Authority. Throughout the 1970s, Gary and Clyde worked out of a small office in the T-hangars. Jones sold new Grumman and Cessna aircraft, offered flight instruction, charters, maintenance, and sold Avgas. The maintenance was performed in a T-hangar and the gasoline, both 87 and 100LL, came from pumps bolted to the ground. In a good year they sold a few airplanes and 100,000 gallons of Avgas. At Jones Aviation the talk was always straight and the bill was always fair. Almost all the local charities asked for and got something from Gary, but always without fanfare.

In 1980, after much encouragement by now Vice-President Gary Jones, the Jones' built their present facility, a 10,000SF hangar with office space and maintenance; they also built a new fuel farm with Jet fuel. Soon, the turbine business began to grow and by 1982 the office was expanded and a pilot lounge and classroom added upstairs. Under Gary's direction, Jones received a Part 141 flight school certificate in 1991 and the flight school grew to eleven aircraft and six instructors. At the same time, Jones began offering turbine aircraft charter and pilot services.

In his spare time, Gary recovered, painted, and flew his favorite airplane, a 1947 Cessna 140. In 1990, he finally started to indulge his passion for auto racing, a sport that would provide him the opportunity to develop more friendships. He attended the 12 hours of Sebring every year beginning in 1967. Gary and brother Wayne's Sebring campsite was very popular among race fans. Gary valued his family and friends more than anything.

In 1996, Gary & Clyde began and oversaw the construction of two large aircraft hangars of 10,000SF and 17,000SF for Jones' new jet customers. By this time fuels sales were closing on one million gallons a year. Gary was a member of the ExxonMobil Dealers Advisory Council until his death.

In September of 2003 a routine colonoscopy revealed a tumor that would turn out to be Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Gary began chemotherapy immediately. He continued planning a new 15,000SF hangar at Jones and running the day to day operations of the business until his strength failed. A check up at the midpoint of the treatment showed little improvement. Different drugs were tried without result. Gary died at his home, with family and friends by his side, on December 12, 2003.