

John Quinlivan



John joined Boeing on July 8, 1968 in the Materials and Processes Group, then known as ST-M. It was an extremely active time in commercial airplanes as the 707 and 727 were in rate production, the 737 was in initial production, while the 747 was in preparation for first flight, and the SST was under development. The “Triple Seven Division” meant the 707, 727 and 737 production programs. John’s first assignments were in adhesive bonding, composites and noise reduction materials supporting both airplanes in service and under development. Later, he also worked on the

development of lightning protection systems for advanced composite materials and the development of high strength - high fracture toughness aluminum alloys.

In 1978 John transferred to the 767 program as manager of the materials and processes group. Following delivery of the first 767, he was assigned to lead the M & P support for the Advanced Composite Development Program (ACDP). John held various management assignments on the ACDP program eventually becoming the program manager. ACDP research led to the design concepts, structural analysis methods, materials and manufacturing processes chosen for the 777 empennage, the first Boeing Commercial Airplanes production commitment to primary structural composite materials. John managed the 777 Empennage Structures design effort returning to Everett in 1992. In 1994 he was promoted to 747 Deputy Chief Project Engineer and later the 767 Freighter Program Manager. He was named 767-400ER Program Manager in 1996 and became Vice President/General Manager of the 767 Airplane Program in 1999. In 2003 he was assigned responsibility for the 747, 767 and 777 Programs and named site manager for Everett. He held this position until he retired from Boeing in 2005.

John frequently tells people that he worked at Boeing for 37 years and had 4 entirely different careers and thoroughly enjoyed every one of them. His most enjoyable experience was managing airplane programs. He particularly enjoyed working on the 777 empennage, the 767 Freighter and the 767-400ER. The 767-400ER airplane was taken on an around the world tour in the summer of 2000. He had a delightful experience being on the road for 43 days meeting with myriads of customers and the diverse cultures of people in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. One of the most memorable parts of that trip occurred in Nairobi, Kenya. Upon returning from a promotional flight with several airline dignitaries, the airplane was met by about thirty 8-year-old boys and girls from a local orphanage. They had just finished a visit of the airport and were fascinated by the new, big airplane. It was easy to see they were very anxious to get onboard. An airplane tour quickly was arranged for them and they gladly climbed on board. It was so amazing to see the look of awe on the children’s faces. Some of these children had never climbed a set of stairs before and it proved quite an experience for them! It is just one of those things that you never forget.



During his career John had the opportunity to work with a number of people in all aspects of Boeing's business operations. All of these people gave a little different view but the amazing thing about all of them was the amount of time they were willing to spend teaching. Even though they never called themselves mentors, they were. John had the opportunity to work with some of the world's greatest people.

The best BMA events that he remembers attending were the Annual CEO talk. He remembers talks by both T. Wilson and Frank Shrontz in particular. It always gave him goose bumps to listen to those bosses talk. He also attended and appreciated the Finance Planning seminars sponsored by BMA before retiring.

John and his wife are both graduates of Gonzaga University. John also attended Princeton where he received his PhD in Chemistry. After Princeton he spent 1-1/2 years at the University of California Medical School in San Francisco. There he studied and worked in the area of muscle BioPhysics. People have often asked how muscle behavior relates to airplanes, and John reminds them that mathematics and physics are the universal languages of science and engineering.

John and his wife Celeste have lived in Magnolia since 1969. They have 4 grown sons and 9 grandchildren, 5 girls and 4 boys including one set of twins. Two sons live in the San Francisco Bay area, one lives near Chicago and one lives in Boston. Consequently, John and Celeste have spent a great deal of time in retirement traveling to be with their sons and grandchildren. They have gotten all of them together several times and enjoy watching them all interact.

After John retired he was President of the Board of Directors of the Future of Flight Foundation. At that time, the Future of Flight Aviation Center facility was still under construction on the edge of Paine Field. The activities brought him back to Everett at least several times a week. The facility opened in December 2005 and is the home to the Boeing Everett Tour. Annually attracting well over 150,000 visitors from around the world, the facility is now the largest tourist draw in Snohomish County.

John is currently working part time, attending design reviews and other consulting work which takes him to Everett again. It is very stimulating to touch base with people he used to work with and experience the excitement of new airplanes once more. He particularly likes walking the factory floor again.

When John was working regularly, he would get up about 4:45 every morning, put on the coffee and take their dog for a walk. Then John would shower and go to work while the dog went back to bed! After he retired, wakeup time slipped to 6:00, then 7:00, and finally 8:00. Boeing asked him to come in for a 7:00 AM preliminary design review. John set the alarm for 5:00 again and when he walked downstairs, their Springer Spaniel thought he was a burglar! Once the dog realized it was John, he got right back into the daily routine and then went back to bed! John calls him his personal trainer because they get out for a walk everyday. Walking is a good way to wind down after work; it is relaxing to be active and out in the fresh air.