
Dedicated to the Advancement of the International Helicopter Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Helicopter Association International Mourns the Passing of William H. “Bill” Wells Jr.

William H. “Bill” Wells Jr., president and owner of Cascade Helicopters in Cashmere, Washington, died on Apr. 15, 2020, at the age of 86.

Bill was born on Feb. 25, 1934, in Seattle, Washington. He joined the military in 1953 as an Alaska Communications System specialist in the US Army Signal Corps. In 1958, he and his family moved to Yakima, Washington, where Bill attended Perry Technical Institute, receiving his A&P license in 1960. The following year, he earned his FAA certificate as a private pilot, fixed wing, and in 1962 joined Cascade Helicopters as a pilot trainee and mechanic. He obtained his FAA commercial rotorcraft license in 1963 and his CFI license in 1964.

Over the course of his career as a pilot, Bill logged more than 11,500 accident-free hours in various capacities, including agricultural spraying, search and rescue, fire suppression, government contracting, and transmission-line repair, to name only some of his many duties. He once said the rescues he was able to perform were “what being a helicopter pilot was all about.”

Bill was a dedicated HAI member, serving as the association’s chairman from July 1, 1994, to June 30, 1995, after having served on the HAI Board of Directors as assistant treasurer and vice chairman. He also sat on the association’s Government Safety Committee (as chairman) and Government Contracting Committee and was the master of ceremonies for HAI’s awards banquets for several years in the 1980s.

In 2001, Bill was honored for his outstanding achievement in the industry with HAI’s Salute to Excellence Pilot of the Year Award.

Bill is survived by his wife of 66 years, Diane Wells; son Steve Wells and daughter Shelley Winterer; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

No memorial-service information is yet available. For updates, or to leave condolences, visit the website of Heritage Memorial Chapel Funeral Home.

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HAI is the professional trade association for the international helicopter industry. HAI members represent more than 3,000 aviation businesses and individuals who safely operate more than 4,500 helicopters approximately 2.3 million hours each year in more than 73 nations. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.