

# The Aileron

September, 2024

Official Publication of the Aero Club of Southern California



## EREN OZMEN

*45th Howard Hughes Memorial Award Winner*



Eren Ozmen's impact on the aerospace and defense sectors is undeniable. As the Chairwoman and Co-owner of SNC, she has been instrumental in transforming a small, high-tech startup into a global powerhouse. Under her leadership, alongside her husband and Chief Executive Officer Fatih Ozmen, SNC has grown from 20 employees to a workforce of over 4,000, operating across more than 40 locations worldwide. This expansion has established SNC as the leading woman-owned federal contractor in the United States, with billions in annual revenue.

Today, Eren Ozmen leads a portfolio of companies, each with their own vast contributions to humanity. SNC is a next-generation prime providing transformative solutions that safeguard

freedom. Recently, SNC secured the Survivable Airborne Operations Center (SAOC) contract with the U.S. Air Force, a \$13 billion endeavor to build the next "Doomsday Plane."

Sierra Space, also owned by Ozmen, has completed over 500 space missions, 14 of which were to Mars. Notably, the Dream Chaser spacecraft is contracted by NASA for multiple cargo missions to the International Space Station, with its first flight scheduled for 2025.

Ozmen's remarkable journey is as compelling as the success of her companies. Born in Turkey, her fascination with space began at age 11, listening to Apollo 11 land on the moon via radio. This passion led her to the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), where she funded her education

through part-time jobs and a graduate assistantship. It was at UNR where she reconnected with Fatih, setting the stage for their partnership in both life and business.

In 1994, the Ozmens took a significant risk by using their home as collateral to purchase the struggling company in a management buyout. Eren, who initially joined SNC as a consultant, quickly became the company's first controller. Her financial expertise was critical in turning SNC around and laying the foundation for its future success.

Under Eren and Fatih's leadership, their companies have received many recognitions over the years, including being lauded as one of the "World's

*Continued on page 1 >*



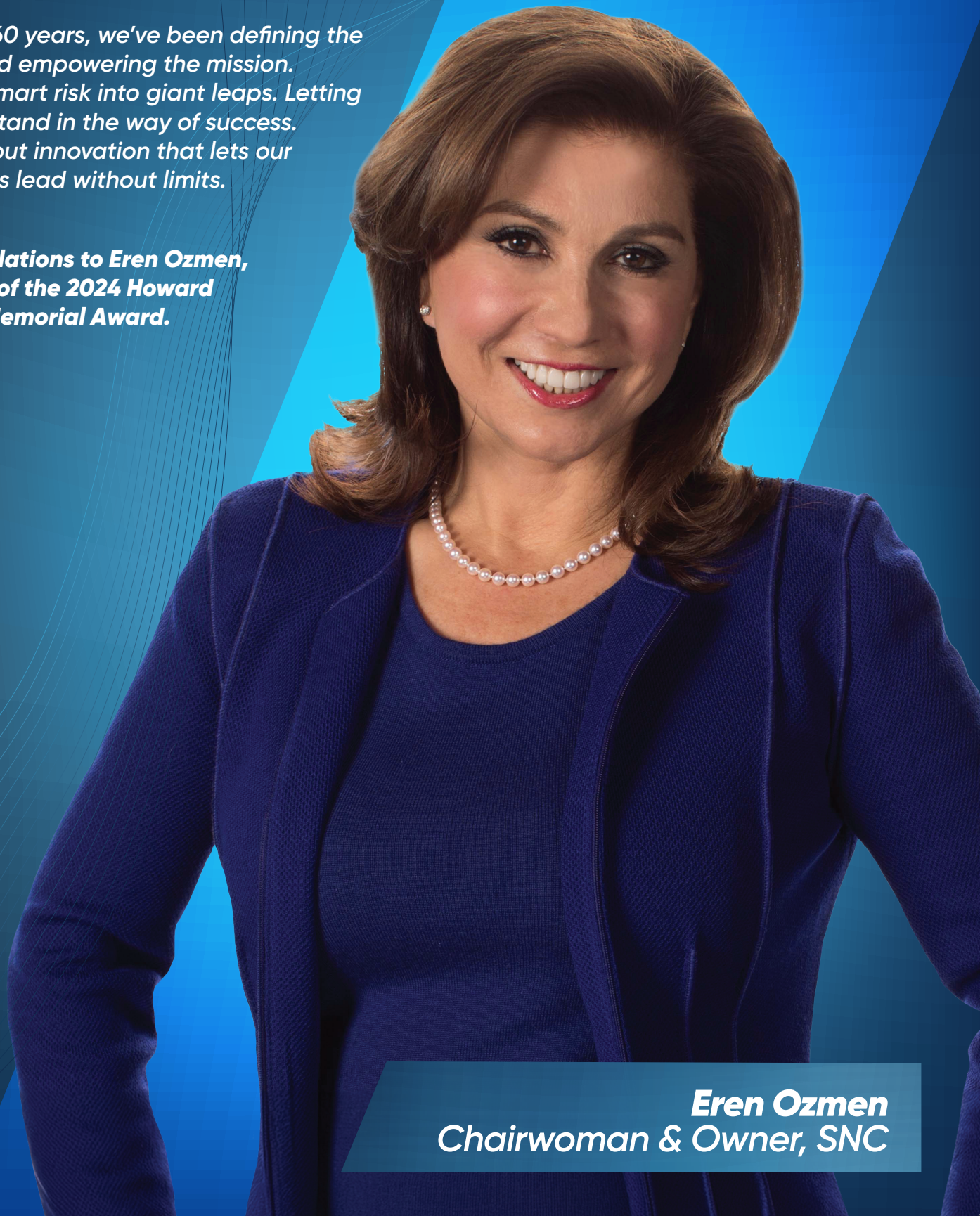
# LEAD WITHOUT LIMITS

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**Congratulations to Eren Ozmen,  
recipient of the 2024 Howard  
Hughes Memorial Award.**



**Eren Ozmen**  
**Chairwoman & Owner, SNC**



## Ozmen (from Font Cover)



Top 10 Most Innovative Companies in Space” by Fast Company, and its Dream Chaser spacecraft earned the “Best of What’s New” award from Popular Science. SNC was also named “Aerospace Company of the Year.” Eren has received numerous awards including the James Forrestal Industry Leadership Award from the National Defense Industrial Association in 2021.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Ozmen is also known for her philanthropy. She and her husband have donated millions to UNR, establishing the Ozmen Center for Entrepreneurship and the Ozmen Institute for Global Studies, nurturing

the next generation of innovators. In 2016, they received honorary doctorates from UNR, and in June 2024, they donated \$1.13 million to launch their alma mater’s Aerospace and Defense Academy. Their generosity extends to numerous causes, including military and veteran support, STEM education, and disaster relief efforts.

Ozmen’s story is not only one of professional triumph but also of profound personal dedication, both to her industry and the broader community.

Congratulations Eren Ozmen, thank you and SNC for your contributions to aviation and aerospace!

## TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

6 p.m. Reception in the Main Lounge

7 p.m. Adjourn to Main Dining Room

### WELCOME

**Suzanne Fuentes**  
HHMA Director

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**David Zabalaoui**  
Vice President

### INTRODUCTION

**Patrick T. Carey**  
President

### DINNER

### AERO CLUB HISTORY

**Suzanne Fuentes**  
**David Zabalaoui**

### SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

**Julie Sims**  
Scholarship Director

### TRIBUTE

**Stephen Perry**  
Elected Executive

### AWARD PRESENTATION

**Patrick T. Carey**

### RESPONSE

**Eren Ozmen**  
Chairwoman and Co-owner of SNC

### CLOSING REMARKS

**Patrick T. Carey**

## THANK YOU

**Eren Ozmen, Our California Club Host Mr. William Shaw**, Chevron  
El Segundo Chamber of Commerce **Marsha Hansen, Lily Craig**, Bell Event Services **Michael J. Bell**,  
The California Club **Philippa Gutridge**, Writer **Katherine Morris**, Film Makers **Jesse and Michelle Brunt**  
GS Financials, **Gwen Sanders CPA**, Studio Printing **Ed Su**



## Aero Club Leadership

**Pat Carey**  
President, Membership Chair

**David Zabalaoui**  
Vice President

**Arthur W. McAllister**  
Treasurer

**Stephen Perry**  
Elected Executive

**Suzanne Fuentes**  
HHMA Director

**Julie Sims**  
Scholarships Director

**Ryann Willis**  
Historian

**George Butts**  
Membership Chair

**Robert E. Lyon**  
ACSC General Counsel

**William C. Withycombe**  
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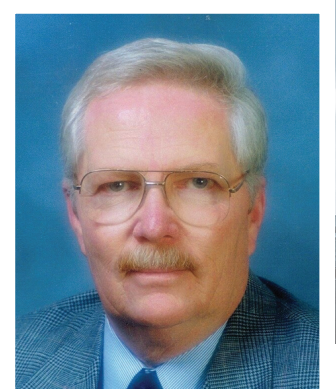
**Michael Lush**

**Carol Marinello**

**Raymond F. Wolfe**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Aero Club of Southern California is the oldest aero club west of the Mississippi, promoting and supporting Aviation and Aerospace advancement since its inception in 1908. Last year, we recognized Laurans 'Larry' Mendelson with our 44th Howard Hughes Memorial Award for his company, HEICO's, efforts to provide reliable, cost-effective aerospace and aviation aftermarket solutions. In addition, the Aero Club recognized the James Webb Space Telescope team with its inaugural Howard Hughes Memorial Discovery trophy for advancing human discovery.

This year we are honoring Eren Ozmen, Chairwoman and Owner of SNC, with our 45th annual Howard Hughes Memorial Award. Under Ozmen's leadership SNC has become the Top Woman-Owned U.S. Aerospace & Defense Company, and a global leader in transformative solutions that advance our national security.

The Howard Hughes Memorial Award medallion is a beautiful work of art, rich in Howard Hughes and Hughes family history. The award was created by sculptor Josef Princiotta. We have acquired the original wax molds from Josef, they displayed at the Flight Path Museum and Learning Center in the Los Angeles International Airport complex.

In addition to the Howard Hughes Memorial award, the Aero Club provides annual competitive scholarship opportunities for college and high school students pursuing careers in aerospace and aviation. To that end, in 2023 we were proud to award \$50,000 in scholarships to these future aerospace leaders.

None of what we do would be possible without our Corporate Sponsors. We are grateful for our Corporate Sponsors and our Corporate Development Director who works closely with these industry leaders.

Board Member Robert C. Ettinger, Colonel, USAF (Ret.) recently hosted a private Mojave Air and Space Port tour. Club members enjoyed a behind-the-scenes adventure through the Air and Space Port Mission & Facility building, Scaled Composites, Boom Supersonic, Stratolaunch, and the National Test Pilot's school. We look forward to offering more aerospace excursions for our Aero Club members in the coming months.

The Aero Club is financially solid and able to support important programs into the future. This is your club. We need your involvement and ideas to improve everyone's experience. If you are not a current member, please consider becoming a member and joining us in our ongoing Aviation and Aerospace support.

Finally, I would also like to personally thank my all-volunteer Aero Club Board of Directors, Executive Officers, and Committee Directors for hours of hard work on behalf of this great organization. None of what we do would be possible without their dedication, and I personally appreciate all they do!

Thank you all,

Patrick T. Carey President

## DONORS, SPONSORS AND MEMBERS

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| William Scott, Jr.   | David Zabalaoui       |
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| Julie Sims           |                       |
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| Suzanne Suppelsa     |                       |
| John Tallichet       |                       |



## Howard Hughes Memorial Award



*The Howard Hughes Memorial Award*, created in 1978, is presented annually by the Aero Club of Southern California to an aerospace leader whose career accomplishments over a long career have significantly contributed to the advancement of aviation or space technology.

The Award was created as a tribute to Hughes by his first cousin William R. Lummis, chairman and CEO of Summa Corporation.

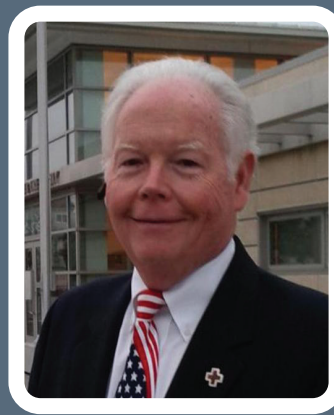
The 45 recipients, pictured above, are a veritable "hall of fame" of the aerospace industry.

The permanent trophy, housed in the Flight Path Learning Center & Museum at LAX, is a

globe and vehicle sculpture with the names of recipients engraved on its base.

A solid silver medallion, cast from silver from Hughes' Nevada mines, is presented to each Honoree. The award depicts Hughes from the era when he was designing and flying his famed Flying Boat, setting world records, dressed in his familiar brown fedora, open shirt and two-toned sports jacket. The reverse side signifies aspects of Hughes' varied life—the oil drilling bit, a reel of film, a landing falcon, the state of Nevada, the earth with a circle of stars symbolizing his round-the-world record, the first communications satellite and the Flying Boat as it crested the waves of Long Beach Harbor.

# Thank you, George Butts



**T**he Aero Club of Southern California's proud tradition of its Board of Directors being comprised of exceptional aviation and aerospace leaders was continued by Past President George Butts.

George became President in 2021 and was at the helm when we honored Howard Hughes Memorial Award recipients Harrison Ford and Laurans Mendelson.

George recruited accomplished board members who have elevated our club to new heights. He, along with his Executive Board and Directors, grew our scholarship

award program, sustained the club's financial growth, and facilitated a smooth transition for our current President Patrick Carey.

Like a good camper and fisherman, George left the Aero Club a stronger organization. While no longer a member of the board, George continues to contribute as Membership Chair, a role he has led since 2016.

George is a true leader, friend, and colleague. We wish George and Linda many years of fishing and travel adventures. Thank you George!



## Thank you Aero Club Donor Si Robin

**S**i Robin, an engineer, inventor, and industrialist, has been a transformative force in aerospace technology, most notably through his pioneering work in aircraft antenna design. With over 80 patents to his name, Robin's contributions to the industry have propelled advancements in military, business, and commercial aviation.

His company, Sensor Systems Inc., located in Chatsworth, California, produces over 11,000 antennas daily, supplying virtually every major aircraft manufacturer, including Airbus, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman. In 2022, Sensor Systems Inc. was acquired by HEICO Electronics Technologies Group, a division of HEICO Corporation.

Born in 1928, Robin's journey into electronics began in Montreal, Quebec, where he attended college before relocating to California in 1948. His early career saw him working at Douglas Aircraft

and Bendix, but it was at Sensor Systems Inc. where he truly made his mark. Taking over the company in 1970, Robin guided it to secure critical contracts, including antennas for AWACS and KC-135 aircraft, before expanding into the commercial market. Under his leadership, Sensor Systems Inc. has become an international leader in antenna technology.

An avid pilot, Robin owns several vintage aircraft, including a J-3 Cub and Beechcraft Staggerwing. His love for aviation history is further demonstrated by his donation of a 1930 Stinson SM-8A Junior to the San Diego Air & Space Museum. In addition to his aviation pursuits, Robin has competed in vintage automobile races, winning championships in 2002 and 2004.

In 2009, he received the prestigious Living Legends of Aviation Inventor Award, cementing his legacy as a visionary in aircraft antenna development. His commitment to the future of the industry is further reflected in his philanthropic efforts, including a \$5 million pledge in 2022 to the University of North Dakota's new fight operations center, supporting the next generation of aviators.

The Aero Club of Southern California extends its deepest gratitude to Si Robin for his generous gift, which will greatly enhance the club's mission to foster aviation excellence.



# Laurans A. Mendelson Awarded 44th Howard Hughes Memorial Award



Laurans A. Mendelson, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of New York Stock Exchange-listed HEICO Corporation, received the 4th Howard Hughes Memorial Award on September 6, 2023.

Aero Club President George Butts presented Mr. Mendelson with the silver Howard Hughes Memorial Award medallion. Mr. Mendelson thanked his wife of 61 years Arlene, his sons Eric and Victor and the 10,000 HEICO team members. Three hundred participants, including the Mendelson family and many friends, attended the gala at the beautiful California Club in downtown Los Angeles.

We wish Mr. Mendelson continued success!

## Aero Club of Southern California Awards \$50,000 in STEM Scholarships to Nine High School and College Recipients!

*214 students received Aero Club scholarships over the past 43 years.*

**T**he Aero Club of Southern California's Annual Meeting and Scholarship Awards Banquet was held at Flight Path Museum LAX on November 15, 2023.

The Scholarship Program Committee, led by Director Julie Sims, awarded \$50,000 to nine students selected for their academic achievements in aviation and aerospace related activities.

Member support makes our scholarship program possible ensuring next generation of aerospace professionals is well-equipped to lead the way forward.

We are grateful to Henry and Paulette Matson, and Gary Burdorf, President of Helicopter Technology Company, who generously donated to the Aero Club's Scholarship fund providing additional scholarship opportunities.

Thank you Henry, Paulette and Gary!

The Aero Club of Southern California is committed to fostering the next generation of leaders in aviation and aerospace. Our scholarship program is a key pillar of this commitment, providing financial assistance to exceptional students pursuing careers in this dynamic and growing industry.

### \$4000 High School Scholarship Recipients

*Melanie Gonzalez-Hernandez*

*Sean Kerry*

*Korban Siebehaler*

*Richard Vidal-Dorsch*

**Marsha Toy**

**Helicopter Technologies**

**Marsha Toy**

**Jack Real**

Scholarship Donors  
Henry & Paulette Matson



### \$6000 College Scholarship Recipients

*Katie Croxall*

*Loren Newton*

*Robert Suppelsa*

*Jake Reid*

*Owen Colomo*

**Nissen Davis Scholarship**

**Henry & Paulette Matson Scholarship**

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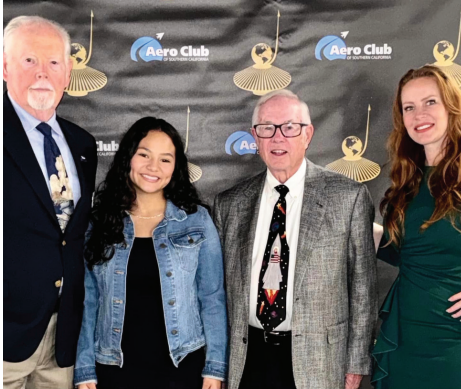
**Loar Scholarship**



Scholarship Donor  
Gary Burdorf



Aero Club President George Butts and Scholarship Director Julie Sims with the 2023 scholars.



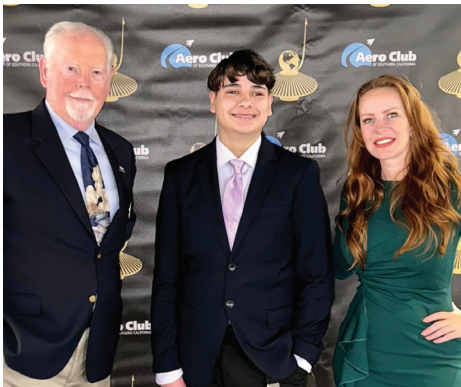
Melanie Gonzalez-Hernandez and  
Dr. Don Brann, Da Vinci Schools Founder



Sean Kerry



Korban Siebehaler



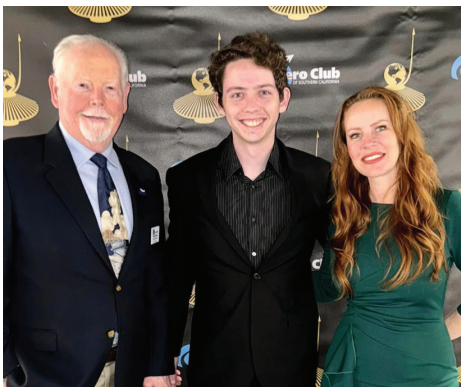
Richard Vidal-Dorsch



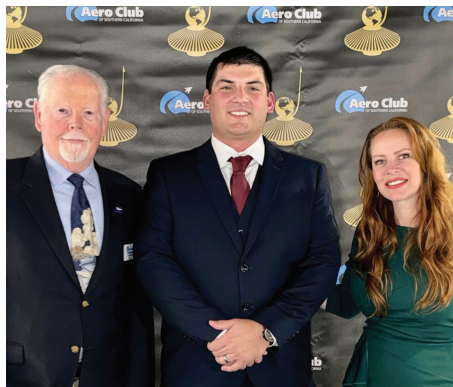
Richard Croxall, accepting on behalf  
of his granddaughter Katie Croxall



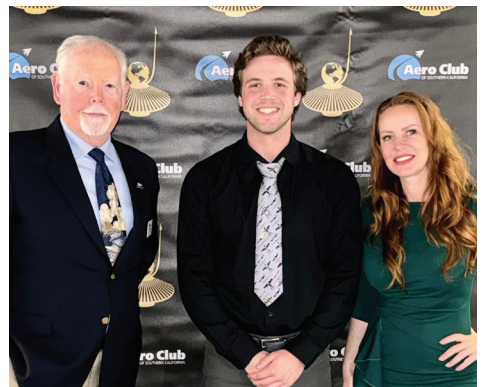
Loren Newton



Robert Suppelsa



Jake Reid



Owen Colomo



## *James Webb Space Telescope Wins Inaugural Howard Hughes Memorial Discovery Award*



**T**he Aero Club of Southern California presented our inaugural Howard Hughes Memorial Discovery Award to the NASA, Industry, Academia, and International Webb Space Telescope team. This award recognized the teams who significantly advanced aerospace discovery. The JWST team was unanimously selected due to its extraordinary accomplishments in the fields of engineering, astrophysics and human discovery, have fundamentally changed our understanding of the universe and redefined what “discovery” means.

When receiving the award, the telescope had already unlocked some of the oldest mysteries of the universe. Since launch, Webb continues to make countless unprecedented observations, including star and planet formation, the oldest known super-massive black hole, the building blocks of life lightyears from earth, hundreds of previously unknown galaxies, and sandstorms on a planet 235 trillion miles away.

Jeff Grant, Chairman of the Space Foundation Board of Directors, shared JWST’s discoveries and introduced the James Webb Space Telescope video. He and Aero Club President George Butts presented the Discovery trophy to Mike Menzel, NASA JWST Mission Systems Engineer, and Robby Swoish, NGC JWST Operations and Maintenance Program Manager.



# Mojave Air & Space Airport Tour

**R**obert C. Ettinger, Colonel, USAF (Ret.), Northrop Grumman Flight Test Manager and Aero Club board member, sponsored a fantastic trip to the Mojave Air & Space Airport. The tour began at the airport with a flight test activities briefing which set the stage for an exciting day.

Scaled Composites was the first stop where participants viewed impressive test aircraft and learned about their innovative air and space craft. The tour visited the National Test Pilot School. Attendees explored the extensive collection of test aircraft and participated in a Q&A session with their experts. Scaled Composites was founded by 2005 Howard Hughes Memorial Award honoree Burt Rutan.

After enjoying a delicious Mexican lunch at the facility, the tour headed to Boom Supersonic. Participants learned about groundbreaking supersonic test aircraft and interacted with a top test pilot in a comprehensive briefing. This innovative work is paving the way for future passenger travel.

StratoLaunch was the final visit, where a test pilot gave a presentation on the Roc aircraft. Roc is named for an enormous mythical bird which carried off an elephant which is appropriate, because the Roc aircraft is massive.

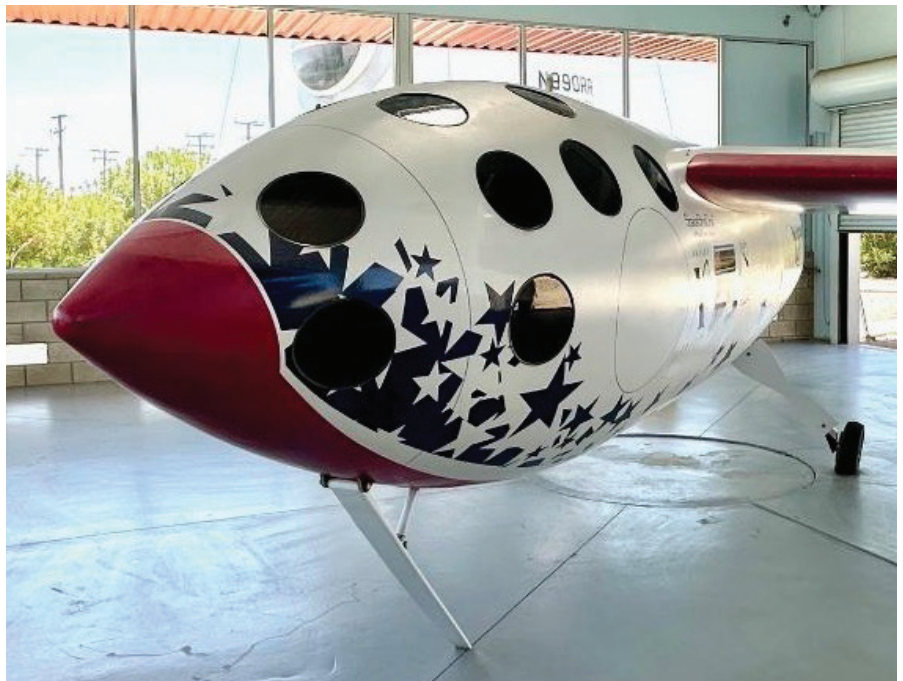
Attendees resoundingly enjoyed the trip and look forward to another adventure with Col. Ettinger! Thank you Bob, for sharing your passion and expertise with club members.



Bob Ettinger and Tour Members



Boom Aircraft



Spaceship One Model

# Aero Club History Committee



Carol Osborne with George Akimoto portraits of Evelyn 'Bobbi' Trout and Amelia Earhart she commissioned for her book covers.

**A**ero Club of Southern California Historian Ryann Willis continues to make exceptional progress standing up the ACSC History Committee. Ms. Willis has formed relationships with numerous Aero Clubs, Associations and the National Aviation Hall of Fame. Her most recent effort has been working closely with Carol L. Osborne.

In the annals of aviation history, few individuals have made as profound an impact as Ms. Osborne. A former logical analyst at Lockheed Missiles and Space Company, Osborne has spent her life preserving the stories, artifacts, and legacies of aviation's early pioneers. Now, through her continued partnership with the Aero Club of Southern California (ACSC) and the efforts of Ryann Willis, her contributions are being carried forward with the care and dedication they deserve.

A Lifetime Member of the National Aviation Hall of Fame, the Kitty Hawk First Flight Society, and ACSC, Osborne is renowned for her deep and unwavering commitment to preserving the past.

Osborne's extensive collection of aviation memorabilia, which she inherited after the passing of her colleague and friend Professor David D. Hatfield, is a remarkable treasure trove of early aviation history.

Hatfield, who founded Northrop University's American Hall of Aviation, entrusted Osborne with managing his vast

archive of aviation negatives, photographs, newsreels, maps, manuals, and documents — materials that have become invaluable to the aviation community.

Following Hatfield's death in 1981, Osborn took on the monumental task of preserving and cataloging his collection. Her passion for history is evident in her authorship of "Amelia, My Courageous Sister," a biography of Amelia Earhart, and "Just Plane Crazy," the biography of aviation pioneer Evelyn "Bobbi" Trout. Osborne's work is distinguished by its dedication to fact over folklore — a philosophy reflected in her famous words about Earhart: "Let's study the HISTORY, not the MYSTERY."

In recognition of her contributions to aviation history, ACSC honored Osborne with a Lifetime Membership. This recognition is not just a testament to her lifelong work, but also a reflection of the enormous value she has added to the field through her meticulous documentation of key figures like Earhart and Trout.

Osborne's ongoing project — finding a permanent home for the collection — has gained momentum with the help of ACSC Historian Willis, a fellow aviation enthusiast. Willis, the granddaughter of aviation pioneer Jack Maddux, is no stranger to preserving family and aviation legacies. After inheriting a trove of her grandfather's airline photos and documents, Willis dedicated five years to researching and

digitizing them. Her passion for aviation grew from this personal endeavor, and today, she is working alongside Osborne through ACSC to safeguard the invaluable collection for future generations.

Willis, who aspires to earn her pilot's license, brings a fresh perspective and energy to the task.

With her background in art dealing and consultancy, as well as her work with organizations like the National Aviation Hall of Fame, she is uniquely positioned to support Osborne in cataloging and digitalizing the materials. Together, the two women are ensuring the stories of early aviators, captured in rare photographs and firsthand interviews, remain accessible to both scholars and the public.

Osborne's dedication to aviation history has earned her a place among the field's most respected historians. Through her work — and now with the help of Willis — Osborne is fulfilling the late Hatfield's dream of preserving the past for future generations. The Aero Club is proud to support this extraordinary effort, recognizing that the preservation of aviation's history is vital to its future.





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**Congratulations to Eren Ozmen on being  
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*Congratulates*



**EREN OZMEN**

Chairwoman & co-owner, SNC

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***“We’re a lot more than Helicopter Rotor Blades”***



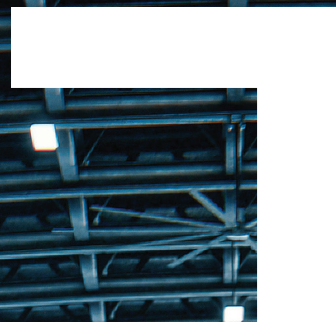
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**About Helicopter Technology Company (HTC):** HTC designs and produces its own line of Helicopter Main and Tail Rotor Blades at its Facilities in Los Angeles, California. The company is an FAA Approved Production Approval Holder (PQ2115NM-D), FAA Part 145 Repair Station (HQPR671X), and EASA Approved Repair Station (EASA.145.6708) with ISO 9001:2015 + AS9100D and ISO 9001:2015 + AS9110C Certifications. Company Strengths include: Structural Design, Structural Testing, Non-Destructive Testing (NDT), Tool Design and Fabrication, Metal-to-Metal Bonding, Structural Assembly, and Flight Testing. HTC was formed in 1994 and has Rotor Blades in Service in more than 55 countries around the world.





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