

The Aileron

Official Publication of the Aero Club of Southern California



NEAL BLUE

46th Howard Hughes Memorial Award Winner

Neal Blue, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of General Atomics, has spent nearly four decades steering one of the most consequential defense and technology companies in the world. Based in San Diego, General Atomics is an internationally diversified private enterprise employing more than 15,000 people across five continents. Under Blue's leadership, the company has become a global leader in unmanned aerial systems, nuclear energy, and advanced technologies that continue to redefine modern aviation and defense.

Blue's trajectory into aerospace and defense has been unconventional. A graduate of Yale University, he served in the U.S. Air Force as a nuclear weapons custodian before turning to aviation and business. With his brother, Linden, he was featured in Life magazine after flying a single-engine Piper aircraft around South America. Later ventures included developing a cocoa and banana plantation in Nicaragua and pursuing real estate projects in Colorado and California. In 1986, the brothers acquired

General Atomics from Chevron Corporation for a reported \$60 million — a turning point that laid the foundation for the company's present scale and influence.

Since then, Blue has maintained a reputation as an intensely private executive, rarely courting public attention even as General Atomics has grown into one of the largest private defense contractors in the United States. His professional affiliations have included service on

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THE GENERAL ATOMICS FAMILY CONGRATULATES

Neal Blue

Our Chairman, Aviation Pioneer and Inspiration



46TH ANNUAL HOWARD HUGHES MEMORIAL AWARD

Neal Blue's vision in aviation, energy, space and defense, paired with his commitment to education and leadership, has changed the way we explore, protect, and understand our world. His journey as an explorer, visionary, entrepreneur, strategist, and philanthropist defines the essence of the Howard Hughes Award, honoring not only what he has achieved, but the legacy he continues to build.



Blue (from Font Cover)

the boards of institutions such as the Salk Institute and the UC San Diego Foundation. He co-founded the General Atomics Sciences Education Foundation, which supports STEM education initiatives, and has served as an advisor to organizations including Yale's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs and the Atlantic Council. His industry contributions have been recognized with honors such as

Caltech's International von Kármán Wings Award for achievement in aviation.

Through General Atomics, Neal Blue has built a company whose scope mirrors the evolving priorities of aerospace and defense: unmanned systems, electromagnetic technologies, data-driven intelligence, and nuclear innovation. Quietly, and

largely outside the public eye, he has shaped tools that define not only the present contours of conflict but also the technological frontiers of the future.



TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

6 p.m. Reception in the Suites A & B

7 p.m. Adjourn to Suites C, D, E & F

WELCOME
Carol Marinello
Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Chris Pannacciulli
Elected Executive

INTRODUCTION
Suzanne Fuentes
President

DINNER

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GROUP
AERO CLUB HISTORY
Adam Sturdivant
Robert Suppelsa

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
Julie Sims
Scholarship Director

HOWARD HUGHES MEMORIAL AWARD
HONOREE INTRODUCTION

Stephen Perry
Vice President

AWARD PRESENTATION
Suzanne Fuentes
Stephen Perry

RESPONSE
Neal Blue
CEO and Chairman, General Atomics

CLOSING REMARKS
Carol Marinello

THANK YOU

2 Flower Girlz, Bell Event Services **Michael J. Bell**, **Chevron El Segundo Refinery**
El Segundo Chamber of Commerce **Marsha Hansen**, GS Financials **Gwen Sanders CPA**,
Lily Craig, Los Angeles Airport Marriott **Katherine Morris**, Studio Printing **Ed Su**



Aero Club Leadership

Suzanne Fuentes President	Carol Marinello Secretary	Ryann Willis Historian	Board Members		Young Professionals Group
Stephen Perry Vice President	Chris Pannacciulli Elected Executive	George Butts Membership Chair	Penelope Burnham	Michael Lush	Julian Malevanets
Arthur W. McAllister Treasurer	Julie Sims Scholarships Director	Zac Turke ACSC General Counsel	J. Bruce Camino	Amanda Meeks	Bruce Renner
			Chris Celtruda	Steve Wallis	Adam Sturdivant
			Robert C. Ettinger	Raymond F. Wolfe	Robert Suppelsa
			Thomas Heinsheimer		Angelica Walsh

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Since its founding in 1908, Aero Club of Southern California (ACSC), the oldest aero club west of the Mississippi, has championed aviation and aerospace innovation. The Club honors industry titans with its annual Howard Hughes Memorial Award and awarding scholarships to young people passionate about aerospace and aviation.

Last year, Eren Ozmen, Chairwoman and Co-owner of Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC), received the 45th Howard Hughes Memorial Award for transforming SNC from a small startup into a global enterprise with 4,000 employees.

This year we honor Neal Blue, Chairman and CEO of General Atomics (GA), with the 46th Howard Hughes Memorial Award. Under Mr. Blue's leadership, GA became a global leader in unmanned aerial systems, nuclear energy, and cutting-edge technologies, advancing aviation, defense, and sustainable energy solutions. His pioneering work developing Predator and Reaper solidified General Atomics' reputation as an aerospace trailblazer.

Beyond the Howard Hughes Memorial Award, ACSC supports aspiring aerospace and aviation professionals through scholarships. In 2024, 13 high school and college students and two educators received scholarships totaling \$131,000.

Our corporate sponsors and corporate development Director play a vital role in making these initiatives possible. We are grateful for their generous support.

This year, enthusiastic young members stood up our Young Professionals Group (YPG). These young leaders recently hosted YPG's inaugural South Bay networking event, bringing fresh energy to the club.

Additionally, Board Member Robert C. Ettinger, Colonel, USAF (Ret.), organized an exclusive tour of the Edwards Air Force Base Flight Test Center. Members and guests were treated to a behind-the-scenes look into a critical defense facility.

Thanks to our dedicated board, ACSC remains financially strong and able to support meaningful programs. Our efforts are fulfilling, and we're achieving remarkable things! I invite you to join or invite a friend to become a member and contribute to our mission.

I am grateful for our all-volunteer Board of Directors and Committee Directors, whose unwavering dedication and camaraderie fuel our success. Serving alongside them is a true privilege.

With gratitude,

Suzanne Fuentes

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2024 SCHOLARSHIP DONORS

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Henry and Paulette Matson
Higher Education Scholarship

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Julie Sims	
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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.

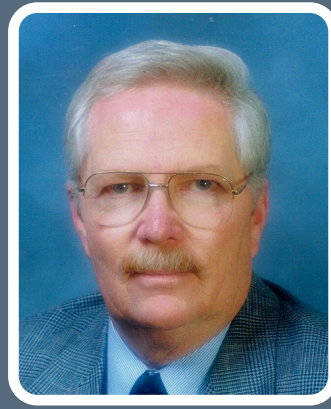
The 45 recipients, pictured above, are a veritable "hall of fame" of the aerospace industry.

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, Patrick Carey



The Aero Club of Southern California is privileged to be guided by leaders whose aviation and aerospace achievements inspire our members and advance our mission. This tradition was upheld by Past President Patrick T. Carey, a decorated U.S. Army aviator, test pilot, instructor, and respected figure in the aviation community. Pat's decades of experience and clear vision shaped his impactful tenure as President.

Under his leadership, Pat and the Executive Board strengthened the club's foundation, driving membership growth, expanding scholarship programs, and enhancing events. He honored the legacy of past leaders while positioning the Aero Club for future success.

Pat's lifelong passion for aviation - from his early flights at Hawthorne Airport under Jean Parker Rose's mentorship to a distinguished 20-year military career and a 32,000-hour professional flying career - reflects the heart of our organization.

Pat's steady leadership ensured a seamless transition to the next generation of leaders, leaving the Aero Club stronger and poised for continued success. We are profoundly thankful for his service as President, his ongoing contributions as a member, and his unwavering dedication to the aviation and aerospace community.

Thank you, Pat!

**2025 HHMA
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OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**



**\$25 MEMBERSHIP
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OFFER EXPIRES 11/15/25

Eren Ozmen Awarded 45th Howard Hughes Memorial Award



Eren Ozmen, Chairman and Co-owner of Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC), received the 45th Howard Hughes Memorial Award on October 3, 2024.

Aero Club President Patrick T. Carey presented Mrs. Ozmen with the silver Howard Hughes Memorial Award medallion. In her remarks, Mrs. Ozmen reflected on her journey - born in Turkey, inspired by Apollo 11, and later building SNC with her husband, Fatih, from a small startup into a global leader. She expressed gratitude to Fatih, their SNC and Sierra Space teams, and the University of Nevada, Reno, where their story began.

The sold-out gala at the California Club in downtown Los Angeles was attended by friends, colleagues, and industry leaders celebrating Mrs. Ozmen.

Congratulations Eren Ozmen on this well-deserved honor!

Aero Club of Southern California Awards \$131,000 in STEM Scholarships to 13 High School and College Recipients!

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

The Aero Club's 2024 Annual Meeting and Scholarship Awards Banquet took place on November 20, 2024, at the Flight Path Museum LAX. Scholars, families, friends, and Aero Club member attendees mingled during dinner and celebrated the scholarship winners.

Under Director Julie Sims guidance, the Scholarship Program Committee awarded \$131,000 to thirteen students and educators for their outstanding academic achievements and passion for aviation and aerospace.

Generous donations from Henry and Paulette Matson, Gary Burdorf of Helicopter Technology

Company, and Sierra Nevada Corporation bolstered the scholarship fund. We extend our heartfelt thanks!

Member support fuels our robust scholarship program, empowering the next generation of aerospace and aviation professionals to lead with confidence.

The Aero Club of Southern California is dedicated to nurturing future aviation and aerospace leaders. Our scholarship program, a cornerstone of this mission, provides vital financial support to outstanding students pursuing careers in this dynamic industry.

Scholarship Donors
Henry & Paulette Matson



Scholarship Donor
Gary Burdorf



Scholarship Recipients:

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J. Bruce Camino Scholarship

Jacob Wallis
Si Robin Scholarship

Melanie Gonzalez Hernandez
Si Robin Scholarship

Gavin Statti
Si Robin Scholarship

Vale V. Rasmussen
Gary Burdorf of Helicopter Technology Company

Owen Colombo
Jack Real Scholarship

Katie Croxall
John Durant Scholarship

Presley Furuike
William Schoeneberger Scholarship

Saahil Sinha
Nissen Davis Scholarship

Robert Suppelsa
HEICO Scholarship

Ved Chandra
Marsha Toy Scholarship

Jessica Snyder
Marsha Toy Educator Scholarship

Kalena Verran
Marsha Toy Educator Scholarship

Young Professional Group

The Aero Club of Southern California's Young Professionals Group (YPG) debuted with a well attended inaugural networking event introducing members of the aerospace community.

Participants featured emerging talent from SpaceX, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Raytheon Technologies, UC Irvine, and other key players, uniting to forge connections and brainstorm innovations.

The YPG Steering Committee - comprising Julian Malevanets, Bruce Renner, Adam Sturdivant, Robert Suppelsa, and Angelica Walsh - stood up YPG and led the event.

YPG annual membership is \$25, providing access to networking and professional development gatherings and engagement with top aerospace executives.

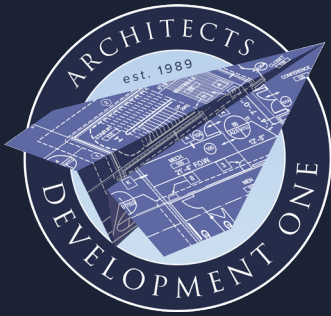
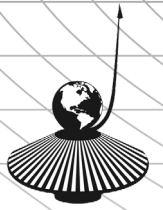
YPG is eager to foster a thriving hub for tomorrow's aerospace leaders, while bolstering the Club's commitment to recognizing achievements and strengthening industry networks.

Information is available at aeroclubsocal.org/YPG and YPG@aeroclubsocal.org



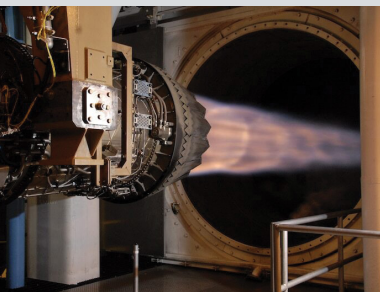
CONGRATULATIONS NEAL BLUE

46TH ANNUAL HOWARD HUGHES MEMORIAL AWARD



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Memorial Award**

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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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