



SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF

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**JAMES S. McDONNELL**

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# James S. McDonnell

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Every human being is unique. But some, to steal a phrase from the writer George Orwell, are more unique than others.

The uniqueness of James S. McDonnell was above the ordinary level.

No one who knew Mr. “Mac” will forget him. His personality was remarkable: a blend of old-fashioned integrity and youthful joie de vivre, of wide ranging curiosity and tenacious attention to detail, of toughness, reflectiveness, and humor. He succeeded not only because he was bright but because he was strong. A man whose McDonnell Aircraft Corporation ended its first year with zero sales, zero backlogs and negative earning, but whose determination and self assurance never seemed to ebb. It takes a special kind of strength to start a tiny company (McDonnell Aircraft, when it started, had a staff of one in a rented office at St. Louis’s Lambert field), nurse it through a difficult infancy and get it on its feet. It takes another kind of strength to take a small, established company and build it into a giant. And it takes still another kind of strength to manage a giant corporation successfully, keep it in the forefront of technology and move it into new fields. James S. McDonnell had all three kinds. The history of American industry includes few men of whom this can be said.

Born in Denver, raised in Little Rock, he was a child of the American heartland. By the time of his death on 22 August 1980 he had become a citizen of the world, an advocate of global understanding and cooperation, a champion of the United Nations and its works.

He attended Little Rock schools and Princeton University, from which he was graduated in 1921 with a B.S. degree and honors in physics. He decided on a career in aviation and enrolled at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the only school offering graduate courses in aeronautics at that time. Member of a class of four, he received an M.S. degree in aeronautical engineering in 1925.

Meanwhile, he felt he must learn how to fly and joined the Army Air Corps for flight training at Brooks Field, San Antonio, Texas. He received his wings as a reserve second lieutenant in January 1924.

Leaving the military, he held many jobs in the small but numerous aircraft plants of that era.

On 6 July 1939, the McDonnell Aircraft Corporation was legally incorporated. Its objective, as Mr. Mac announced, was “to be of the maximum service possible to the United States Government in the design and manufacture of airplanes.”

McDonnell Douglas today is a diversified company which reported 1988 sales of more than \$15 billion, a firm backlog of over \$26 billion, about equally divided between commercial and government business, facilities in numerous locations within the United States and Canada, and over 120,000 personnel.

Mr. Mac was the recipient of six honorary degrees, Doctor of Engineering degrees from Washington University, St. Louis and the University of Missouri, Rolla; Doctor of Law degrees from Princeton University and the University of Arkansas; a Doctor of Science degree from Clarkson College, Potsdam, New York; and a Doctor of Medicine degree from Washington University.

He received many honors, including the St. Louis Award, the Daniel Guggenheim Medal, the Robert J. Collier Trophy, two National Aeronautics and Space Administration Public Service Awards, the Forrester Memorial Award, the Spirit of St. Louis Aviation Award, and the National Academy of Sciences’ Hunsaker Award. He was an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society and an Enshrinee in the Aviation Hall of Fame.

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*Dear General Bellis:*

*It is a pleasure for us to help this worthwhile cause in support of the Air Force Academy by establishing this Falcon Foundation Scholarship in honor of James Smith McDonnell.*

*Mr. "Mac" was indeed a legend in his own time. He was a great leader, creator and one of America's finest patriots. I know of no man more widely respected by his colleagues and his co-workers.*

*By means of this scholarship, we are proud to be able to extend his efforts in helping young people who seek a leadership career in the United States Air Force.*

*Sincerely,*



*John F. McDonnell  
Chairman*

*McDonnell Douglas Foundation*

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The Falcon Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit foundation. Its purpose is to provide scholarships to College or Preparatory Schools for motivated young people seeking admission to USAFA and a career in the Air Force.

Although it is a separate organization, the Falcon Foundation works closely with USAFA.