

Cascade Airways

For Immediate Release:

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Mark M. Chestnutt, founder, President & CEO of Cascade Airways, Inc. passed away peacefully at his Spokane, Washington home on May 4, 2020. Born December 19, 1933, he was 86 at the time of his passing. Mark had been ailing with Alzheimer's Disease for the past several years.

Cascade Airways, Inc. was founded in 1969 and operated through the spring of 1986 and throughout most of that time was the Pacific Northwest's largest Regional Airline. Headquartered in Spokane, Washington, Cascade had its primary operating and maintenance base in Walla Walla, Washington serving the hubs of Seattle/Tacoma, Portland, Spokane, and Boise to most cities in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Utah, and Nevada. Cascade also flew to Calgary, Alberta, Canada with scheduled service from Seattle and Spokane.

Mark A. Nilson, Cascade's former Vice President of Marketing & Planning said that Mark Chestnutt was a true aviation pioneer in the 3rd Level Aviation Industry. He was well-known and respected, not only in the Pacific Northwest but throughout the nation as a founding member of the Regional Airline Association in Washington, DC. At one point Cascade Airways was the 4th largest regional airline in the nation.

As recently as September, 2018 Mark was honored at a reunion of former company employees held at the Spokane Convention Center. The well attended reunion offered former employees to thank Mark for the opportunity that he gave them. Nilson said that there was an amazing amount of love in that room. Over the years, more than 1,000 people worked for Cascade and currently there are several hundred united as the former Cascade family in the company Facebook Group Page.

Some comments from the Facebook Page regarding Mark's passing:

Russ Greaves, Captain - Very sorry to hear of Mark Chestnutt's passing. Mark gave many of us an employment opportunity we may never otherwise have had, and the chance to work with some very fine people.

Lenora Donohoe, Station Agent - A very good man and good businessman! Good memories.

Robin Ball, Sales Department - I so loved that man! He was a gem and that was my favorite job ever.

Tony Schab, Station Manager - As I was reading this a Beech 99 flew over my house, my heart is sad, what a great person he was, to get my start and still work in the industry.

John F. Christ, Captain- great human that will be missed, but never forgotten!

Greg Roberts, Flight Controller & Dispatch - Mark fought hard for Cascade with the deck stacked against him the whole time. I was there from April 3, 1973 until we shut it down. Mark was a great pal and coworker too.

Tom Clark, Director of Station Training - I just drove by his log house last weekend. RIP Mark... he was a gentleman and a professional.

Mike Hays, Station Manager - Thank you Mark for trusting a young, wet behind the ears kid to run your Walla Walla station. I learned so much from you. Always had the greatest of respect for you and always will.

James H. Mundy IV, Captain - One of the most rewarding company's and people I ever worked with and for.

Jimmy James, Captain - Mark was one of the most honorable men I ever worked for and with! All Airline Execs could emulate him and be honored to do so...GOD BLESS.

Dave Hett - Sorry to hear of Mark's passing. I was with Cascade for 7+ yrs, as a station manager and pilot and loved working with the wonderful people! Many fond memories!

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Becky Cawley, Station Agent - Mark was a great man who built a wonderful airline

family. Job well done Mark, Rest in Peace!

Shell Aashiem, Reservations - Fly with the angels Mark. You were an awesome boss!

Dennis & Nora Figgins - We spent 11 years working with that great airline family. So sorry for Mark's passing. Mark and his company will always be in our thoughts.

Mark Nilson, VP Marketing & Planning - the Cascade Airways reunion in 2018 was a wonderful tribute to Mark and the major impact that he had on all of us who had the pleasure of working with him. He had an amazing kind heart, a great sense of humor, and he was a true aviation pioneer.

Brian Hughes, Station Agent - Many of us can credit him for relationships now entering fifth decade, thanks!!!!

Joe Bova, Aircraft Mechanic - Words cannot come out of my mouth to say how I feel but I will try. Mark, you were the one boss that actually understood me. You made me feel welcomed. You will be missed in so many ways...

Lamar Sieg, Captain - Goodbye and Blue Skies to you Mark. Thank You for creating this extended family of hundreds of people and the tremendous impact you had on our lives, it was a pleasure and a blessing.

Margie Starr, Accounting - Yes, Mark will always be remembered and loved!

Elliott Thompson, Flight Controller & Dispatch - Godspeed Mark, you created this amazing extended Cascade family that will always miss you.

Lin Salter Roberts, Station Agent - Oh this news hit hard....my heart hurts with you, your family along with our Cascade family. Mark was obviously a great influencer, a leader, a mentor respected and loved by so many. To this day I cant help but smile when I hear a Beech 99 fly over and think of days gone by, great people in my career path and men like Mark who believed in all of our enthusiasm and hard work for his dreams of a successful, purposefull airline...you served us and Pacific NW region well, Mark. We loved you and everything you stood for.