

March 2020 Luncheon Speaker

Our March luncheon will feature a speaker and subject well known to many of you. He is a fellow MDC alum who also worked for a major customer, and his subject is an airplane that is near to our hearts. Jack McHale will present the third generation Orbis Flying Eye Hospital (FEH), which is based on our MD-10. You may remember that he was our speaker for March 2010 and presented the DC-10 based second generation Flying Eye Hospital.

Jack started his work life at Douglas Long Beach in 1965, when he was (we assume) just a child ☺. He rose rapidly from Mathematician to Sales Engineer to Project Manager then Sales Manager and eventually Director of Sales and Marketing. His work with customers so impressed FedEx that they hired him as Managing Director Acquisitions and Sales. In this role at FedEx, he continued to have a close relationship with MDC as a key player in purchasing aircraft for FedEx, including MD-11, Trijet derivatives, MD-10 conversions, and the initial B777 purchase.

While at FedEx, Fred Smith asked Jack to work with “a bunch of doctors” to find a replacement for the first generation flying eye hospital, which was a DC-8. Jack took the lead in procuring a DC-10-10 and after the conversion was the point man for FedEx’s FEH support, which was the start of his long affiliation with Orbis. He got so heavily involved that the Orbis Board asked him to be president for a “short interim period” which turned out to be two years.

As time went by, the DC-10 FEH got older and the fleet got smaller and as a result availability of crew, maintenance and repairs got harder. Jack again took the lead, after FedEx donated an MD-10 Series 30 freighter, in taking a very different approach to the design and installation of the hospital features. In the picture below left is a portion of the operating theatre and the airplane on the right. You can attend the luncheon to hear Jack describe the concept and its execution in detail



Bill Rickard
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