

## **CHICAGO SKYLINERS - Presidents Remarks**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Annual General Membership Meeting - September 4, 2018**

Thank you for participating in Skyliner activities such as this luncheon today. It is a privilege to be with you.

A few years ago, I heard Patricia Patterson Dudley speak. She is the daughter of the late founder and longtime chief executive of United Airlines, “Pat” Patterson. He ran United for over 30 years retiring in 1966. When her dad started out, she recalled that United could not afford to pay the pilots; the pilots responded that they would fly for free to keep the company going. The pilots and Patterson worked out an arrangement which was done on only a handshake! As a result, Patterson loved the pilots and referred to employees as his United family.

Later when he retired, Patterson declined a multimillion-dollar “golden parachute” payment and instead took his pension, like any other employee.

If you or a family member worked during these incredible Patterson years, will you raise your hand? Thank you. This is our history and our legacy.

During and immediately after the Patterson era significant numbers of founding level employees of United Airlines began to retire. They shared a unique work history and close ties dating back to the origin of the airline. They did not want to lose contact with each other after retirement.

Informal groups of retirees formed in places like San Francisco, San Diego, Denver and Chicago. By 1975 the Retired United Airline Employees Association (RUAEA) was established as a national organization linking retirees from different cities.

A few years later, the Chicago group of United retirees decided to formalize and become a local independent chapter of RUAEA. A Statement of Understanding was signed on October 14, 1981. This was the beginning of what came to be known as the Chicago Skyliners.

Over the years Skyliners have:

- held quarterly luncheons
- breakfasts on the north and south side each month
- Created a website which showcases our Organization
- Added blast email notifications to keep everyone informed in real time
- Established relationships with the Alliant Credit Union and the Mainliner Club of Chicago
- All this has been done by a dedicated group of volunteers

During 2018 we have accelerated improvements to our structure and activities.

Organizationally in 2018, we have:

- Adopted By-laws
- Adopted a Policy and Procedure Manual for leadership
- Established an Emeritus Committee where experienced Skyliner leaders may step down from active service yet remain available to share their expertise upon the request of the president
- Opened a new checking account with current information

- Rewrote and updated our website
- Sought new volunteers to add to our Organization
- Nominated a new group of officers for 2019 and shared their bio's with the membership
- Reported our financial status and status of Skyliners to the membership during this meeting.

During 2018 our activities and programs area have:

- Strengthened entertainment at our luncheons
- Added multiple United special interest tours to O'Hare, the United Archives, and the old EXO building, now known as OPC.
- We are very pleased to announce a new tour of the United Data Center which is scheduled on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Few visitors every see this area which is located behind security. Technically, this is what keeps us flying. See our written program today for details.
- All along the way we have made friends and networked with active employees and United leaders who seem anxious to work with us in the future.

But the “elephant in the room” is our 70% drop in membership since 2012. We plan to address the decline in the final months of this year.

- But what is our strategy? And what does success look like?
- Success for 2018 looks like the number “27.” We need “27” new members during 2018 just to stay even with our membership level in 2017. We must stop the decline this year.
- Individually, we ask that each of you use the brochure located on your tables to personally invite a new member to join us this year. The brochure is also posted on our website under ABOUT US.
- We have 2 major activities remaining in 2018: The Data Center tour on October 1<sup>st</sup> and the Christmas luncheon on December 4<sup>th</sup>. We encourage you to invite someone who is not a member to join Skyliners and attend these functions.
- To address recruitment, we will appoint one liaison to each employee group, such as CS or Willis employees, to personally connect with those about to retire and invite them to join Skyliners.
- To address retention and to assist our new leaders, we will begin our 2019 membership renewal efforts in November rather than waiting until well into the next year. A team of 5 volunteers will act as account executives assigned to specific members for renewal. We will try not let those who wish to renew their Skyliner membership fall through the cracks.

We are accountable to you and will report our progress to you. We ask for your continued support in these efforts so our historic Organization with roots, reaching back to the dawn of aviation may continue.

Thank you,

Diane Webb, President