

# The Triumph of Flight®

Bringing an Icon to Dayton - The Birthplace of Aviation

Branding America's Only National Aviation Heritage Area  
Symbolizing Ohio's Aerospace Leadership

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Soaring 270 feet above the intersection of I-70 & I-75 and seen by thousands of vehicles daily, this 144 foot wingspan monument to the Wright Flyer will symbolize Dayton, Ohio throughout the world.



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## Key Team Member Passes

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We are heartbroken to announce the passing in July of one of our most valuable team members, George Mongon, our fund raising counselor since October 2011. George was instrumental in bringing our project to the levels of visibility and credibility it currently enjoys.

## To George...

By Dan Patterson

***"We are all travelers in this world. From the sweet grass to the packing house, birth till death, we travel between the eternities."*** Alan Geoffrion, "Broken Trail"

Our friend, George Mongon, is gone. He crossed over into the eternities.

He traveled a lot in his business and in many ways it seems as if he is still on the road, except we always had a phone call many times each week. For me the sound of George's booming laugh still rings in my ears. The twinkle in his eyes and his quick friendly smile remains. George left a wide wake behind him and his influence was broad.

He brought a sense of possibility to every project he became a part of, and I use that phrase intentionally as George rarely just "did the job," he made himself an essential element. His open and endless curiosity about any solution was and remains infectious. There never was a closed loop, always a look to a better answer. The size and scope of the project never mattered – the answer was always, "How can we make this better?"

I must write about George as not gone, but a presence which is with all who knew him. His career was a long list of accomplishments and

George was also the reason this project enjoys the talents and skills of Dan Patterson, our design consultant. He and Dan were associates and close friends for many years. Dan graciously agreed to write the following eulogy saying afterwards, "This was a tough assignment. I have given this my best as George is in my ears urging me to make it better."



See [George](#) on page 2

George Mongon, Wright Image Group team member since 2011  
(Photo courtesy of Dan Patterson Studio)

George from page 1

goals well met. His passions were always foremost with his family – Marcy, son Michael, daughter Adrienne, and the grandkids who knew him as “Chief”. George was a devout Catholic and his faith carried him through difficult times.

George came to Dayton in 2008 as the Development Director for the Air Force Museum Foundation and its effort to raise the funds necessary to build the fourth building, now nearly completed. He was responsible for a large percentage of the donations to the project, including securing the anchor gift of \$10,000,000 from Lockheed/Martin.

In the few years he was a part of our community, George wove himself into the fabric of local efforts to make our lives better. His dedication to “The Triumph of Flight®” is the example we all know best. He brought the project to a statewide and national scope. He thought nothing of calling any officials, elected or corporate to further the cause. He did actually say once that, “They put their pants on just like the rest of us.” His legacy will be the completed monument and the beacon he believed it will be for the community, the state, and the nation.

The suddenness of his passing is still a shock and the void where he stood remains very real. I can hear George’s voice though saying to us all, “Well, OK, that stinks, but let’s get on with this and make it better than before.”

Tecumseh (also a Chief) left us these words long ago, but now . . . for George John Mongon, our friend:

“So live your life so the fear of death can never enter your heart. Trouble no one about their religion; respect others in their views, and demand that they respect yours. Love your life, perfect

your life, beautify all things in your life. Seek to make your life long and of service to your people. Prepare a noble death song for the day when you go over the great divide. Always give a word or sign of salute when meeting or passing a stranger if in a lonely place. Show respect to all people, but grovel to none. When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the light, for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food and for the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies in yourself. Touch not the poisonous firewater that makes wise ones turn to fools and robs them of their visions. When your time comes to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with fear of death, so that when their time comes they weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song, and die like a hero going home.”



*George with wife, Marcy.  
(Photo courtesy of Dan Patterson Studio)*

*Thank you, George.  
God speed.*

## Great Exposure To The Press

The National Aviation Heritage Alliance (NAHA), in which the Wright Image Group is a partner, hosted 12 aviation writers and editors from all over the country in a first-ever Aviation Writers Summit this September. The purpose was to expose the national media to the extensive aviation-centered activities and heritage available to them here in southwestern Ohio's National Aviation Heritage Area. The principal sponsor was Dayton International Airport, with several of the other NAHA partners and local businesses also contributing. Represented at the summit were publications like *AOPA Pilot*, the Smithsonian's *Air & Space*, and *Aviation for Women*.

The first event was Wednesday evening September 30<sup>th</sup>, a reception in the National Aviation Hall of Fame at which the Wright Image Group was invited to display its eight foot tall floor display of the Triumph of Flight®. Board members Steve Brown and Curt Nelson, as well as Amanda Wright Lane, one of the event organizers, were on hand to discuss the project and answer questions for the writers as well as the more than 60 elected officials, community leaders, and representatives from the other NAHA partners.

See [Summit](#) on page 4



*Ron Kaplan welcoming summit attendees.  
(NAHA photo by Timothy R. Gaffney)*



*Fairborn Mayor Dan Kirkpatrick with Curt Nelson  
(NAHA photo by Timothy R. Gaffney)*



*Summit Attendees in front of Wright Flyer III with Amanda Wright Lane  
(NAHA photo by Timothy R. Gaffney)*



*Steve Brown discussing Triumph design with Matt Thurber who writes for Aviation International News  
(NAHA photo by Timothy R. Gaffney)*

## Notices for Wright Image Group Members

- Beginning in 2016, this quarterly newsletter, the Triumph of Flight®, will be published three times annually instead of quarterly. Publication dates will be mid-January, mid-May, and mid-September.
- The 2015 Annual Membership Meeting will be held on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 3:00 p.m., immediately after the monthly Board of Directors meeting, and in the same location, 1605 N. Main St, the Ohlmann Group conference room.

To join, make a donation, or get information explaining the different contribution and recognition levels, write to us at:

**Triumph of Flight®**

1605 N. Main St  
Dayton, OH 45405  
or visit our website,

[www.wrightmonument.org](http://www.wrightmonument.org)

**Annual Membership Dues\***

1 year - \$20

2 years - \$35

3 years - \$50

*\*Applicable to Individuals, Families or Businesses*

**Summit** from page 3



*Dawne Dewey showing summit attendees the Wright State University Special Collections and Archives Wright Brothers Collection. (Photo courtesy of Wright State University)*

As always, the Triumph display model was a conversation piece, generously highlighted in his remarks by Ron Kaplan, Enshrinement Director for the Hall of Fame. Summit visitors were generally impressed by the monument's potential to brand the region and the state of Ohio, and seeing the model seemed to renew the enthusiasm and interest of several other officials. Particularly supportive in his comments, as an example, was Mayor Dan Kirkpatrick of Fairborn. Renewing these supporting ties with community leaders will pay benefits as the WIG continues to seek major donors to the project. And of course, any publication that chooses to write about the Triumph will certainly boost the project's visibility.

The consensus after the summit was that it was highly successful and definitely worth repeating in future years. Undoubtedly, when the Triumph is built, it will serve as an awesome venue for a summit event!

The WIG is a proud partner of the National Aviation Heritage Alliance.

As such, we ask our donors to make checks out to the Aviation Heritage Foundation and mark them so that it is clear the donation is specifically intended for the Wright Image Group.

By flowing our donations through the foundation, the federal government will match a portion of them. This additional funding goes to support the aviation heritage of the entire region. (See instructions below)



**Make checks payable to:**

**Aviation Heritage Foundation, Inc.**

With the following comment on the "For" line:

**"Restricted for WIG"**

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