



# Jack Leffler

## *2025 Pathfinder Award Recipient in the At Large and Flying Category*

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The Museum of Flight's Annual Pathfinder Awards honor individuals with ties to the Pacific Northwest who have made significant contributions to the development of the aerospace industry. Pathfinder Award recipients are selected by The Museum of Flight, the Pacific Northwest Section of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and representatives of other aviation and aerospace organizations and companies throughout the Northwest.

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Jack Leffler's dedication to aviation led him to devote his life to turning The Museum of Flight into an institution that stands the test of time. He earned his private pilot license as a teenager, beginning a decades-long career in aviation and as a beloved founding member of one of the top

aviation museums in the country.

Leffler flew in the Colorado Air National Guard before serving in the U.S. Army Air Forces, flying American heavy bombers in World War II. Soon after, he joined United Airlines as a commercial pilot.

While indulging in his passion for adventure in the 1960s in Alaska, Leffler stumbled upon a decaying, nearly forgotten vintage airframe in a garbage dump and immediately realized its significance. That plane was a Boeing Model 80, the only known survivor of a historic family of aircraft long thought completely lost to history.

The restoration of this last of the Boeing Model 80 series was the catalyst for the establishment of the Pacific Northwest Aviation Historical Foundation (PNAHF),

which later became The Museum of Flight. When the organization officially incorporated, Leffler was a founding trustee and the first official member.

Over 36 years as an accomplished United Airlines pilot, Leffler had flown a myriad of planes, demonstrating versatility and talent. His antics with gorilla masks during that time earned him an esteemed reputation as a practical joker and "legend in his spare time."

Leffler's vision for preserving Seattle's aviation heritage, and his early support of the PNAHF and The Museum of Flight, has impacted every person who steps through the Museum's doors and embodies the spirit of the Pathfinder Award.