

Flight Safety Foundation and Me

BY SID BAKER

The sudden death of Sid Baker, vice chairman of Flight Safety Foundation's Corporate Advisory Committee, just a few days after he sent us the following column, was a sad shock to everyone who knew Sid. Recently retired as head of Kodak's flight department, Sid, 63, was already eager to take on new challenges. He will be missed by all who knew him and worked with him.

Since you are reading this magazine, you and I have something in common — a passion for safety, particularly aviation safety. I was bitten by the safety “bug” not long after I started flying. I can still remember the importance placed on maintaining a safe environment and the expectation that all of us would operate safely. Granted, that was in a military flight school, but the same principles and consequences apply to every situation we encounter today. Those who are corporate aviation safety managers all have the same purpose — to achieve predictable outcomes based on proven procedures and practices that enhance the opportunity for our companies to become more successful.

Most of us began our careers thinking we were the center of the operation. As we matured, we realized that the reason there is an aviation department is to facilitate the success of the company — not so we could fly airplanes! We cannot guarantee the company's success, but we can certainly enhance the chances of success by providing a rapid response to travel needs with the flexibility to modify schedules while

also operating safely and securely into many varied locations not served by our airline counterparts.

We eventually realized that we are part of a system larger than our individual companies, and that we can impact that system either positively or negatively. Flight Safety Foundation helps to make that impact favorable.

No other organization views aviation as a global operation involving manufacturing, operations, maintenance, air traffic control and regulation with a regional — as well as a universal — outlook on safety. The Foundation recognizes that not all aviation efforts are equal, with vast differences among regions, among operators and among controlling agencies. The Foundation offers a forum to address these varied safety issues in a nonpartisan manner, appealing to government agencies in all countries and offering suggestions, support and advice to those concerned with maintaining a safe air transportation system.

The Foundation offers a venue to meet and trade information with other aviation professionals. The Foundation represents our safety interests to



government agencies around the world. The Foundation represents you and me on safety matters in venues we cannot access, and that absolutely affect how we do our jobs and how we can contribute to the success of our companies. The Foundation has taken the leading role in dealing with fatigue issues, preventing approach and landing accidents and controlled flight into terrain accidents, checklist construction, corporate flight operational quality assurance programs, explaining the advantages of safety management systems, and petitioning governments to prevent the criminalization of the accident investigation process. The Foundation likely will lead future projects that will identify risks and formulate responses to enhance safety, which facilitates our companies' drive to succeed.

The Foundation is important to me and to you. It is important to our companies, it is important to our nations, and it is important to our global economy.

We are the Foundation; it works through us and for us. I am proud to be associated with the Foundation and look forward to all we can accomplish in the future. ➔