

THE FORD FAMILY AVIATION LEGACY

The Tradition Continues with Pentastar Aviation

Aviation has been in the blood of the Ford family for the past century, ever since legendary automaker Henry Ford's Model T engine found its way into a plane built by Ford employee Charles Van Auken in 1909. These days, Henry Ford's great-grandson, Edsel B. Ford II, is continuing the aviation tradition by making Pentastar Aviation at the Oakland County International Airport (PTK) in Waterford, Mich., one of the highest ranked FBOs in the United States.

Edsel B. Ford II credits his family's centuries-old connection with aviation for his success.

played a critical role in the global growth and success of the company."

This passion – and business sense – for the aviation industry in the Ford family lineage really took off not long after the construction of Van Auken's plane. In 1925, Dearborn, Mich., became home to the first modern airport in the United States with the unveiling of the Ford Airport. Factory and hangar facilities soon followed and, in April 1925, the Ford Air Transport Service was born with its first flight from Dearborn to Maywood, Ill., carrying Ford company mail and freight.

That same year, the Ford Tri-Motor plane was introduced. After undergoing a series of improvements, the 5AT model took to the skies in 1928. These often colorful Tri-Motor planes quickly became the standard aircraft for nearly every airline in the United States and Latin America and helped establish commercial air travel.

As the Ford aviation empire continued to grow, the company began using airplanes as a means of advertising and promotion.

Ford sponsored promotional events, including balloon races, air tours, special flights, airplane demonstrations and plane races. Several flights featured staunch Ford supporter Charles Lindbergh, who attracted crowds too large to count when he landed at the Ford Airport in 1927. Lindbergh, who was born in Detroit, also gave Henry and son Edsel Ford I their first

airplane ride in August 1927. The name that had become synonymous with automobiles was now synonymous with air travel.

During World War II, Henry Ford's manufacturing efforts continued to turn toward aviation as his company and other automakers built Liberty engines for use in planes during the war – an era that many experts say was the dawn of the transport and passenger aviation history. During the post-WWII era, Henry Ford quickly became a leader in the aviation industry.

Flash-forward to today and it comes as no surprise that Edsel B. Ford II has taken the aviation reins, just as his forefathers before him did with so much zeal and success. He purchased DaimlerChrysler Aviation in 2001, reinstating the name Pentastar Aviation, which originated in 1980. Under his leadership, the company that was originally started in 1964 as an in-house corporate flight department at Willow Run Airport in Ypsilanti, Mich., has grown into one of the premier aviation services companies in the United States in the past several decades. In fact, in the past five years alone, Pentastar Aviation's PTK location has consistently ranked in the top five FBOs in the United States in various industry surveys by consistently providing one of the highest levels of service in aircraft management, charter services, aircraft brokerage, aircraft maintenance, FBO services and gourmet catering.

With the PTK location thriving, Edsel B. Ford II opened a second FBO at Van Nuys Airport (VNY) in Van Nuys, Calif., in 2006. The Van Nuys location features the same level of excellent service offered in Waterford and is continuing to grow.

Although his two aviation ventures have already achieved much success, Edsel B. Ford II – like his great-grandfather before him – is not sitting on his laurels. He has much more ambitious plans when it comes to the future of Pentastar Aviation and admits that this is just the beginning.

"With the best facilities, equipment, security and safety procedures and, above all, a highly professional staff proud of our long heritage, the sky really is the limit to Pentastar Aviation's future," says Edsel B. Ford II.

In addition to the ownership of Pentastar Aviation, Edsel B. Ford II serves on the Board of Directors of Ford Motor Company and is a majority owner of Detroit-based marketing firm Marketing Associates and the golf services company The Ryder Group. He is also an active supporter of many charitable organizations, including the Salvation Army, the Detroit 300 Conservancy – where he serves as chairman – and the Skillman Foundation – which is dedicated to improving the lives of children in Detroit.

Ford's wife, Cynthia, and four sons are all avid aviators, as well, frequently traveling by air – including flights on Ford's personal aircraft, a Falcon 2000.

By acquiring Pentastar Aviation, Edsel B. Ford II (opposite page) is continuing the Ford family's rich aviation legacy. His great-grandfather Henry Ford (this page, center photo, on the right) and his grandfather Edsel the First (this page, center photo, on the left) were greeted by such aviation royalty as Charles Lindbergh (this page, center photo, middle).



"Growing up, I often accompanied my father, Henry Ford II, on flights on the company aircraft," says Edsel B. Ford II. "I always got permission to sit in the cockpit and, over the years, became friendly with all of Ford's pilots and flight crews. I learned a lot and gained an immense respect for professional aviation. I also saw firsthand how business aviation

