

MEDALIST FOR 2006

For exemplary leadership in aeronautics teaching and research, development of significant state-of-the-art aerodynamic testing techniques, and outstanding contributions to public service.



ROBERT LOEWY

Robert Loewy's childhood passion for aeronautics led to an exceptionally long and productive career that overlapped with many revolutionary developments in aerospace engineering.

Born in Philadelphia in 1926, he received his Bachelor's degree from RPI and his M.S. degree from MIT in Aerospace Engineering. Initially he embarked on an applied engineering career working for Cornell Aeronautical Laboratories where he developed his landmark rotary wing unsteady aerodynamic model known as Loewy's theory. Subsequently he moved to the Vertol Division of Boeing where he rose to the position of Chief Technical Engineer, and at the same time completed his Ph. D. in 1962 at the University of Pennsylvania.

His academic career started at the University of Rochester, where after a one year break as Chief Scientist of the Air Force he became Dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. His talents as an academic administrator were recognized by his alma mater and in 1974 he became Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). After this demanding position he decided to return to research and he was instrumental in winning one of the three Rotorcraft Technology Centers of Excellence established by the Army Research Office in 1982.

At RPI as an Institute Professor and Director of the Rotorcraft Center his mentoring of several graduate students led to the development of a comprehensive nonlinear model for composite rotor blades. During this period he also produced penetrating reviews of the state of the art in rotorcraft vibrations as well as the emerging field of smart structures as applied to aeroelasticity. In 1993 he moved to Georgia Institute of Technology to assume his current position as Chair of Aerospace Engineering School and William R. T. Oaks Professor. His leadership has elevated the School to a position of pre-eminence in the last decade.

These and numerous other contributions in unsteady aerodynamics, aeroelasticity and structural dynamics, combined with his service on many advisory boards, have led to generations of improved rotary wing vehicles culminating in the current V-22 tilt-rotor.

Daniel Guggenheim Medal

Many awards and honors have been bestowed on Professor Loewy. He is a member of the National Academy of Engineering, an Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics as well as the American Helicopter Society. He is the recipient of the Spirit of St. Louis Medal Given by ASME, the Lawrence A. Sperry Award and the Dryden Research Lectureship given by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and the Nikolsky Memorial Lecturer awarded by the American Helicopter Society.