

Nomination

Of

Leslie “Les” Schweizer

For The

Paul Schweizer

Lifetime Service Award

Les Schweizer an SSA Member for more than 30 years (43 to be exact) has been devoted to the sport of soaring, sailplane design and needs of sailplane owners. His commitment to the soaring community is ever stronger as he continues to keep the American built Schweizer sailplanes flying.

We ask the SSA to present this award forthwith.

Signed this Date, October 18, 2021

Nominated by:

Bill Batesole,

SSA Member 922671

President of the Board of the National Soaring Museum

This Nomination is Co-Signed (through letters of support) by the following SSA Members and by other SSA Members listed on the signature sheet.

Jim Short, SSA Member and President of the Vintage Sailplane Assoc.

Stuart Schweizer, SSA Member, National Soaring Museum Trustee, Past Executive of the Schweizer Aircraft Corporation

Wilson “Rusty” Lowry, SSA Member, SSA National Soaring Museum appointed Trustee

Kyle Schweizer, SSA Member, Co-Owner K&L Soaring LLC

Trafford Doherty, SSA Member, Director of the National Soaring Museum

Nomination of Les Schweizer for Paul Schweizer Lifetime Award

It is my honor to nominate Leslie "Les" Schweizer to be selected for the Paul Schweizer Lifetime Award.

The name Schweizer is well known in US soaring history. Over two thousand one hundred sailplanes were manufactured by the Schweizer Aircraft Corporation from the 1930s to the 1980's. Most US soaring pilots learned to fly in Schweizer sailplanes. The founding three Schweizer brothers, all members of the US Soaring Hall of Fame, manufactured sailplanes and promoted the sport of soaring here in the United States.

Les Schweizer, the son of Ernest Schweizer, was born into soaring and continues to contribute to the sport. Les started as a line boy at the Schweizer Soaring School 60 years ago and started working in earnest at Schweizer Aircraft in 1970 after graduating from New York University with a degree in aeronautical engineering. Les' engineering career spans more than 50 years and he spearheaded a wide array of aeronautical projects. He designed the SGS 1-35 high performance sailplane, the SGS 1-36 sport sailplane and the SGM 2-37 motorglider for the United States Air Force Academy. Les also developed four new models of the AG Cat airplane, the 269C-1, 269D series helicopters, the Fire Scout unmanned helicopter and the Schweizer 2-37A and 2-38B reconnaissance aircraft used by many governments. Les has been an FAA DER (Designated Engineering Representative) for 42 years, boosting his ability to design and approve engineering changes.

In 2007 Les obtained the Type Certificates of all Schweizer sailplanes and the manufacturing rights from Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation (the next owner of Schweizer Aircraft Corporation). Under the name K&L Soaring LLC, Les and his son Kyle Schweizer (the third generation) have built a modern manufacturing facility in the Elmira area. All the Schweizer-built sailplanes are now known as K&L Soaring LLC sailplanes as they are now the Type Certificate holder. This essential support has allowed the worldwide Schweizer sailplane fleet to remain airworthy through parts availability, engineering knowledge and repair facilities, resulting in keeping an aging fleet of sailplanes flying. The US Air Force Civil Air Patrol, the Canadian Cadet training program, soaring clubs and private owners all rely on K&L Soaring LLC to help keep their Schweizer sailplanes flying.

It is hard to imagine what the fate of the Schweizer fleet of sailplanes would be today if Les did not barter six months of extra work from Sikorsky Aircraft to obtain the Type Certificate rights to all the Schweizer sailplanes. This fleet is now on solid ground. Schweizer-built sailplanes have been and will remain the avenue to US glider flight training and low-cost soaring fun.

Attached are supporting letters for Les Schweizer's contributions to the soaring community.

Sincerely,

Bill Batesole

SSA Member 922671

President National Soaring Museum Board of Trustees

Les Schweizer Nomination Sheet, Co-Signed by the following SSA Members:

David S. Sherrill David S. Sherrill SSA# 858684

Richard Roelke RICHARD ROELKE SSA# 925543

Daniel Newkirk Daniel Newkirk #78838

Jack R. Bruning Jack R. BRUNING SSA# 367687

Robert Zagarowski ROBERT ZAGARSKI SSA# 993800

Nominating
Leslie E. Schweizer
for
The Soaring Society of America
Lifetime Achievement Award

Let's start with a few bullet points about Les!

- Lifetime in the pursuit of designing, building, manufacturing and supporting sailplanes to promote soaring clubs, schools and individuals who want to learn and continue to fly.
- Lifetime in learning and practicing how to make better and safer sailplanes.
- Decades of working with FAA / SSA in developing and tailoring standards and regulations for modern sailplanes.
- Part of joint FAA / SSA experimental program (1980) to use motorgliders for training American pilots, which eventually led to regulations for certifying and flying motorgliders in the US.
- Designer of Schweizer 1-35, American competition sailplane, designed first for new FAI Standard Class rules then for the FAI 15-Meter class when the competition rules changed. Still the highest production American-built glider for these classes.
- Designer of Schweizer 1-36, created for American clubs and schools.
- Designer of Schweizer 2-37, the first American motorglider to be built and FAA certificated to the international JAR-22 (CS-22) Standards and US Air Force Academy specifications.
- Encouraged other glider enthusiasts to join the Schweizer Soaring School, Schweizer Aircraft, and now K&L Soaring, resulting in their wider contributions to soaring through design, production and service.
- Worked several additional months for the buyer of Schweizer Aircraft Corporation in order to secure most glider records, tools, fixtures and spares so Schweizer gliders could be supported for the future.
- Founded K&L Soaring along with son Kyle to support and maintain the Schweizer fleet of sailplanes in the United States. The company prospers today and many owners and operators continue to fly Schweizer sailplanes economically and safely due to K&L support.
- Additionally, continues the decades-long Schweizer family tradition of hospitality with regular Open House tours and receptions at K&L Soaring.
- After listening to comments from the user population, designed and certificated numerous modifications and updates to make the Schweizer 2-33A into a more modern and easier-to-use training sailplane. The culmination of these updates is the 2-33B which is well into the FAA certification process.
- Recognizing the need for a better, safer and easier-to-use towplane, Les continues with a new experimental project to create the 2-31A, a modern towplane with radically improved features over the

60-year-old towplanes currently in use. This aircraft has recently flown and is undergoing rigorous professional flight testing.

- Continues development of the 1-35 design, Les keeps on designing and prototyping enhancements to the 1-35 to increase its performance, safety and appeal to current and future owners.

Beyond the Facts!

Since his earliest days in soaring, Les Schweizer has been involved in helping others in soaring, first as a youth, working the line at the Schweizer Soaring School, then as an instructor. He learned from flying a wide variety of sailplanes and subsequently shared that knowledge. He flew contests, learned what modern sailplanes flew like, and then shared what he learned with both students and experienced pilots. This background also helped him as he designed and produced new sailplane models for the American soaring public.

Growing up in a family devoted to designing, building and flying safe sailplanes, Les continued that tradition and spent his own life developing sailplanes and other aircraft. Along the way he became steeped in the tradition that to build a glider also includes the responsibility to help it remain safe, viable and supported over many decades. Safety, always a hallmark of Schweizer designs, continues throughout Les's tenure at Schweizer aircraft and K&L Soaring.

Throughout his career Les has encouraged other people who were dedicated to gliding to join Schweizer Aircraft and K&L Soaring and contribute even further. The individuals and teams assembled and encouraged by Les and his family are a continuing group that helps keep the sport of soaring vibrant; Les's support of gliding extends well beyond his singular contributions.

Eventually becoming President and Chief Engineer of Schweizer Aircraft, Les never forgot the basis of soaring that helped the company grow to become a responsible employer that benefitted the Elmira and upstate New York region, as well as the national population of Schweizer glider owners and users.

Les has always appreciated those who have helped him along the way and regularly gives credit where it is due, to associates and his family. Les is always particularly quick to thank and acknowledge his wife Bonnie and their children, as well as his cousins and nephews who have contributed to the soaring movement along with him. Finally, he is always reverent in acknowledging the pioneering work of the three original Schweizer brothers, Paul, Bill, and especially his Father, Ernie.

Les' vision, personal contribution and dedication to the glider-flying community has benefitted the sport of soaring in a manner that fully qualifies him to join the select group of individuals (including others of his own family) that have been awarded the Soaring Society of America's Lifetime Achievement Award.

I am pleased to nominate him!

Jim Short
August 30, 2021

To: Whom It May Concern
From: W. Stuart Schweizer
Date: September 13, 2021

My purpose in writing this memo is to express enthusiastic support for Les Schweizer becoming a recipient of the Soaring Society of America's Lifetime Achievement Award. I have obviously known Les for nearly my entire life and had the good fortune to work closely with him for over 35 years.

Les's credentials for receiving this award are exceptional! He has: (1) Almost 60 years experience flying sailplanes including flight instruction, test flight, and competition; (2) Worked as an aeronautical engineer for over 50 years actively involved in leadership roles overseeing the design and development of sailplanes as well as light aircraft and helicopters; (3) Served as an owner and executive of America's most important manufacturer of sailplanes for over 30 years; and (4) During the past 14 years established and operated K & L Soaring which is focused on spares, maintenance, and development support for the fleet of sailplanes produced by Schweizer Aircraft Corp (SAC). In what follows I will briefly cover some of the more important aspects of Les's impressive qualifications for this award.

After graduating from New York University in 1960 with a degree in aeronautical engineering, Les started working full time at SAC. Initially he served as certified sailplane flight instructor in SAC's soaring school under the leadership of Bernie Carris and Erwin Jones. In 1971 he moved "inside" where he began his career as an aeronautical engineer with his dad, Ernie Schweizer, as his mentor. To say that Les is a chip off the old block is a gross understatement. Like Ernie he developed into a superbly competent engineer, always doing his work with absolute integrity and product safely as his top priority.

In the early 1970 Les was the principal designer of the SGS 1-35, a state of the art competition sailplane of which 100 were produced. Later in the decade Les lead the design and FAA certification effort on the SGS 1-36 "Sprite" sailplane. Throughout this period Les was also deeply involved in aircraft development projects which included very specialized reconnaissance airplanes that employed a significant amount of sailplane technology.

In 1980 after SAC's sailplane production had started to wane, the company purchased all rights to the Ag-Cat line of ag-airplanes which it had been producing under subcontracts since 1957; first for Grumman and later for Gulfstream . By that time Ernie had retired and Les had overall responsibility for engineering and quality control for all of SAC's products and served as a company executive.

In another significant development in 1983 SAC acquired from Hughes Helicopters the Model 300 light helicopter product line which then included the U S Army's primary flight trainer, the TH-55. This meant that additional engineering design challenges were heaped on Les. Over the next 20+ years under Les's engineering leadership, the Model 300 piston powered helicopter was significantly improved and two gas turbine powered light helicopter models were designed, FAA certified, and produced.

Since his early days working as an engineer, Les was involved in projects in which sailplane technology was adapted to specialized requirements including the 2-37 motorglider under U S Air Force Academy contracts and a series of recon aircraft for domestic and international customers. Some of these recon aircraft were developed to perform long duration missions at high altitudes while others performed missions close to the ground where low noise and infra-red signatures were critical. Les's ingenuity, engineering background, and experience with sailplane design and aerodynamics allowed these products to perform very successfully.

Engineering related to anything that flies has always been of serious interest to Les. However, sailplanes have always been his true passion. Three years after SAC was sold in 2004, Les “retired”. Upon his retirement he was able to obtain all rights to SAC’s sailplane products including engineering data, FAA type certificates, production tooling, and parts inventory. He along with support from his son, Kyle, set out on a mission to give new life to the 1,000+ fleet of SAC sailplanes still out there and serving as the backbone of sailplane flight training and recreational flying in the U S and Canada. Up to that point these sailplanes were becoming more and more difficult to keep in operation. K & L has developed into a successful small business that is developing improvement to SAC sailplane products and supporting hundreds of clubs, commercial operators, and private individuals who operate these sailplanes by providing engineering, spare parts and repair support. Today the fact that SAC’s sailplane products can be well maintained is having a highly positive impact on soaring in North America as I believe will be the case for many years to come.

Today Les continues to carry on SAC’s legendary tradition in supporting soaring while at the same time living what I know to be his dream, and I’m sure that soaring in the US is benefiting significantly from his efforts. Les is richly deserving of receiving the SSA’s Lifetime Achievement Award..

Having worked hand-in-hand with my father (Les Schweizer) thru the years both at K & L Soaring and Schweizer Aircraft Corporation, it is my feeling that he is more than deserving to receive the Paul Schweizer Lifetime Award for his many contributions to the sport of Soaring. During his time as the Chief Engineer at Schweizer Aircraft he designed the SGS 1-35 & SGS 1-36 sailplanes and the SGM 2-37 motorglider that were all used extensively in the Soaring community and are still in use today. The SGM 2-37 for instance made a major impact on the U.S. Air Force Academy's Soaring Program. By using the SGM 2-37 as their ab-initio trainer they were able to cut the number of flights required for solo by roughly half. Although Schweizer Aircraft moved away from sailplane production for a variety of reasons, the company under his direction continued to diligently support the existing fleet with engineering and spare parts support.

In 2006, Les and I made the big decision to take over support for all the Schweizer sailplanes from Schweizer Aircraft. The decision was primarily based on our love of Soaring and to continue on the family legacy of Schweizer sailplanes that has been on-going since the first one was flown in 1930. When the business was first started were just figuring on selling some spare parts a weekend a month or so to keep the fleet flying as necessary. In 2007, due to a larger than anticipated demand for parts the first year we formed K & L Soaring, LLC in order to better serve our customers. At the end of 2008, we broke ground on our initial facility that has been expanded (3) times since the original one was built and now employs over 10 people. Under his direction as co-owner and engineering manager at K & L Soaring he has driven us to continually improve upon the existing designs so that we can make them easier to fly and maintain. For our main customer, the Canadian Air Cadets, which fly a fleet of approximately (80) SGS 2-33 sailplanes, he has designed numerous changes to the aircraft to increase their ability to use and maintain their fleet. Some of the changes have been minor ones, but some have been major and really effected the way that the Canadian Air Cadets are able to use their fleet on a daily basis. For instance, the 40# MTOW increase has allowed them to continue to fly the larger cadets in their program that they were struggling to get into the air.

Since he started of flying sailplanes as a young boy, his love of Soaring combined with his engineering skills has allowed him to leave a mark on soaring thru his aircraft design work and his continued support of Schweizer Sailplanes at K & L Soaring. These contributions are more than enough to make Les Schweizer to receive this prestigious award.

Kyle Schweizer

Co-Owner

K & L Soaring, LLC

Completed Engineering Projects at K & L Soaring

- 1-26 Hydraulic Brake Kit Design
- 1-26 Battery & Shoulder Harness Re-Location Tray
- 1-26 Crotch Strap Installation
- 2-33 Gross Weight Increase (1080#)
- 2-32 Spring/Swivel Tailwheel
- 2-33 Dual Ballast System for Reduced Min Solo Pilot Weight
- 2-33 Front Lap Belt Re-Location
- Signed Over 500+ Drawings Changes at K & L Soaring for Schweizer Sailplanes since 2006

In-Work Engineering Projects at K & L Soaring

- 2-33B Design Changes
 - 5" Fuselage Stretch
 - Nose Wheel Installation
 - Wider Canopy Frame & Skylight
- 1-35 Dive Flap & 18M wing
- Refurbishment of Schweizer SA2-31
 - Rebuilding original aircraft as a purpose-built glider towplane
 - Will become test bed for improved Schweizer towplane tow release system
 - Designing systems that could be retrofit to other towplanes like panel mounted rear view camera system

General Engineering Accomplishments

- Schweizer Aircraft Chief Engineer from 1979 to 2007
- FAA Engineering DER since 1979
- Chief Designer for SGS 1-35, A & C
 - Aircraft won the 1976 Smirnoff Derby
- Chief Designer for SGS 1-36
 - Including the conversion of the NASA 1-36 that was used for controlled, deep-stall flight program
- Chief Designer for SGM 2-37
 - Aircraft was used successfully by the U.S. Air Force Academy as an Ab Initio trainer for their glider program for many years
- Chief Designer for the conversion of the Martin 845A (Highly Modified 1-34 Built by Schweizer Aircraft in early 70's) drone into a manned aircraft that is currently still in use by New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology for high altitude weather research
- U.S Patent #7,758,310 For Translational Thrust System For A Rotary Wing Aircraft
- 2011 Inductee of Niagara Frontier Aviation & Space Hall of Fame

General Soaring Accomplishments

- 1998 1-26 Championship Spiffy Award Winner
- 1998 1-26 Championship David C. Johnson Memorial Trophy
- CFI-G Rating

Rusty Lowry

22515 Camp Calvert Rd

Leonardtown, MD 20650

30 September 2021

Consideration of Mr. Les Schweizer for the Paul Schweizer Lifetime Award

To whom it may concern,

I would like to add my support for consideration of Mr. Les Schweizer for the Paul Schweizer Lifetime Award. Les's lifetime association with sailplanes exemplifies the type of commitment that I believe this award was created to recognize and honor.

Most soaring people are well aware that Les literally grew up surrounded by sailplanes and flying and went straight from engineering school into Schweizer Aircraft. His summers spent at the Schweizer Soaring School were intermeshed with design and shop work on new gliders and improvements to old ones with Les performing the majority of the design effort for the last several Schweizer aircraft including the 1-34, 1-35, 1-36, 2-37 and 2-38.

Most people are also aware that Les continued his daily involvement in soaring after the sale of Schweizer to Sikorsky by retaining the glider production rights, spare parts, and jigs and establishing K&L Soaring to provide ongoing support of Schweizer aircraft to the soaring community.

What most may not know is that Les not only continued to provide support for "his" older designs, but he also never stopped developing new designs aimed at improving and sustaining soaring. These include an aggressive modification to the ubiquitous 2-33 trainer glider incorporating substantial gross weight increases, a larger rear cockpit, and a nose wheel (2-33B), improved flaps for the 1-35, and an advanced tow plane featuring innovative flight controls, enhanced situational awareness through the use of video cameras and touch screen displays, and a strong appreciation of noise concerns addressed by exhaust location and propeller choice – the 2-31A.

I had the distinct pleasure of conducting the initial flights of the 2-31A with Les this past August and could not have been more impressed by his professionalism and the thoroughness of his design and manufacture of this aircraft. On top of that, his unbounded enthusiasm for the aircraft and for soaring shown through each day and was vigorously applied to preparation for each flight.

Many people work hard during their careers and accomplish great things in the performance of their jobs but Les stands tall above the crowd in that he not only did all of that but has continued to work hard and accomplish great things after completing a long career... and shows no signs of stopping.

Please give Mr. Les Schweizer your strongest consideration for the Paul Schweizer Lifetime Achievement Award as, in my opinion, he has not only earned the recognition but continues to do so every day.

Sincerely, Rusty Lowry

SSA representative on the National Soaring Museum Board of Directors

October 10, 2021

To whom it may concern,

I first met Les Schweizer shortly after my father joined Schweizer Aircraft as (Sailplane) Sales Manager in 1959. Les, his cousins, and I, had the opportunity to work in the Schweizer Soaring School as line boys and later as instructors and, in some cases, tow pilots. I looked up to Les – not because he was taller (which he was) - he just seemed more level-headed - even at that young age. I didn't get to work with him very much; he was heading for aircraft engineering – and I wasn't. I left Schweizer Aircraft in 1980 and didn't see Les again until much later – after 2002 - when I accepted the position of Executive Director at the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum at Hammondsport, NY. But it wasn't until I joined the National Soaring Museum as Director in 2016, that I really got to know Les – and appreciate the full extent of his contribution to American Soaring.

There's no question that Les Schweizer is a talented designer and engineer – the 1-35 convinced us all of that; but, in my view, his efforts to save the sailplane assembly fixtures and tooling from being sold for scrap after Schweizer Aircraft was taken over by Sikorsky in 2004, was to become a pivotal element for future of soaring in America. In roughly 50 years, Schweizer built over 2000 sailplanes with the 2-22/2-33 and the 1-26 comprising the lion's share of their sailplane production. Today, these sailplanes (especially the 1-26 & 2-33) can be found virtually anywhere that soaring is taking place. But time (and heavy-handed students) had taken its toll on these ships and many of them were being retired – mainly because of minor damage and/or maintenance issues. What was needed was a first-class repair facility that would specialize in Schweizer sailplanes. And Les, teaming up with his son, Kyle, formed a company that would serve to do just that – provide a place where anyone could get his/her Schweizer product professionally repaired - and/or rebuilt to like-new condition. Here's the thing - the 2-33 is still the best (and safest) basic trainer on the planet (I say this after 3000 hours of instructing in them). And a great number of them are in constant use (here *and* in Canada), while the 1-26 is entering a new "Golden Age"! I say this, because the level of excitement - and enthusiasm - that I see every month in the 1-26 Association's newsletter is astounding. In increasing numbers, folks are competing, getting their Diamonds, and just flying for the fun of it in these AFFORDABLE sailplanes. Just about every issue features the latest 1-26 "barn find" and articles on 1-26 restoration projects. And backing up ALL of this is *K&L Soaring* – run by Kyle and Les Schweizer (and staffed by a select group of retired Schweizer employees). Thanks to Les's foresight and determination, soaring in America will remain within the reach of the average person for the foreseeable future. For soaring in America, this is a "Very Big Deal" and, for that reason, I believe that the Paul A. Schweizer Lifetime Service Award should be presented to Les Schweizer.

Trafford L-M. Doherty
Executive Director, National Soaring Museum

To: SSA Lifetime Achievement Award Nominating Committee

Letter of Support for Les Schweizer for the SSA Lifetime Achievement Award

With his engineer background, Les Schweizer had a major role for many years keeping the Schweizer Glider factory in Elmira, NY developing and manufacturing significant numbers of gliders for training and self-enjoyment use by the gliding fraternity of the USA and Canada, including the USAF Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. He was also a hands-on person, acquiring from the Insurance Company my totaled SGS 1-34, N77BS, and completely restoring it to flying status, putting it into the hands of the MIT soaring club.

Bernald Smith
US Soaring Hall of Fame member