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Frank Mitchell

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CRITICAL ISSUES IN AVIATION/AEROSPACE EDUCATION

Frank Mitchell

Public education has become a critical factor for the aerospace industry if the industry is to continue as a growing, viable, transportation factor in the future. To that end, the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) sponsored this first panel discussion on current issues in Aerospace/Aviation Education in order to begin an effort to focus the attention of our industry and professional education on the key areas of concern to both groups if aerospace/aviation education is to succeed. As to the purpose of this panel discussion, we know that the high school graduating class of the year 2000 left kindergarten in 1988. For industry, this means there will be a large pool of potential aerospace workers available for the 21st century, as well as a large group of decision makers who will determine public policy issues in aerospace.

In our industry, the major trade organizations, including GAMA, have identified the major issues facing aerospace and aviation for the 90s. These include system capacity as related to the Air Traffic Control (ATC) system and available airports, FAA enforcement policy and certification standards, labor shortages of technical and management personnel, the product liability issue, and foreign competition.

All of these matters depend upon an informed public but the vehicle to provide an educated public, aerospace/aviation education, has issues of its own to resolve in order to do a more effective job in the education field. Hence, the purpose of this panel at the 1990 National Congress on Aviation and Space Education.

In order to have current issues discussed expertly, GAMA invited five distinguished aerospace educators to present papers addressing a specific current issue in the field that affects the future progress of aerospace/aviation education. Those papers are contained in the following pages.