



ROYAL AERONAUTICAL HONOURARY FELLOWSHIP AWARDED

World Airnews correspondent major general Des Barker becomes the second South African recipient ever to receive such an award

Founded in 1866, the Royal Aeronautical Society has the support and maintenance of high professional standards in aerospace disciplines as its main objectives.

An international, multidisciplinary institution, the society is dedicated to the global aerospace community and has more than 22,500 members.

Since the title of honorary fellow was first awarded by the RAeS in 1917, some 101 years ago, there have been only 191 recipients.

Last year in December 2018, an honorary fellowship was bestowed upon Major General Des Barker (SAAF Rtd) - only the second South African after Wits professor Beric Skews in 2008.

His citation read, "Major General Barker, experimental test pilot, is admitted to honorary fellowship in recognition of the major role that he played in establishing and developing a formal flight test capability in the South African Air Force (SAAF) in collaboration with the South African defence industry.

"In a flying career spanning more than five decades, Major General Barker also played key roles in a wide range of SAAF flight test programmes. He served as chief test pilot (1990-1995) and then officer commanding (1996-2000) of the SAAF test flight and development centre. In addition, through his publications and presentations he has made a significant contribution to display flying safety internationally.

"Major General Barker qualified as a pilot in 1969, a maintenance test pilot in 1974 and an experimental test pilot in 1984. He is a qualified flying instructor and a display pilot with 7,200 flying hours on 58 different types of aircraft. He was appointed as air attaché to the United Kingdom in 2000 and base commander AFB Makhado in 2004. He retired in 2008 as chief of air staff operations and became the manager of aeronautics research at the council for scientific and industrial research from which he retired in 2017.

"He remains self-employed as a civilian



Des Barker

experimental test pilot and serves as the vice president of the society of experimental test pilots (South Africa) and on the boards of the aeronautical society of South Africa and of Airshow South Africa. In addition to his publications on display flying safety, 'Zero Error Margin', he has written a handbook for general aviation pilots entitled 'Guidelines for the Flight Testing of Experimental and Homebuilt Aircraft'. He has received numerous honours and awards from the South African air force, the European airshow council and the society of experimental test pilots."

In receiving the award Barker said, "It's with humility and pride that the RAeS honorary fellowship award is accepted; as a test pilot, it is even more humbling to share the honour with the world's most illustrious scientists, engineers and test pilots, including Orville Wright, Winston Churchill, Thomas Sopwith, Frank Whittle, Sydney Camm, Barnes Wallis, Dr Theodore von Kármán, Capt. Eric 'Winkle' Brown, Alex Henshaw, Chuck Yeager and Joseph Kittinger."

The 2018 RAeS Honours and Awards

were announced on Tuesday, 4th December 2018, at the Wilbur and Orville Wright Lecture at 4 Hamilton Place, London. Bill Tyack, chairman of the medals and awards committee said, "This year's medals and awards ceremony was a splendid occasion. The excellence and diversity of the achievements of our various categories of recipients, coming from 15 different countries, demonstrates the vitality of the aerospace community around the world."

Major General Barker is a council member of the Aeronautical Society of South Africa (AeSSA), a division of the RAeS and plays a significant role in the activities of the AeSSA.

Honorary Fellowship Reference. The world's highest distinction for aerospace achievement awarded for only the most outstanding contributions to the aerospace profession. This honour is conferred on those whose careers, leadership, inspiration and impact marks them out as among the most eminent, widely recognised and influential aerospace professionals of their generation. →