GERALD TOBIAS FLIES WEST

News / Business aviation, Personalities

Gerald Tobias, the former president and CEO of Sikorsky Aircraft who helped develop the Black Hawk military helicopter and launched the S-76 executive helicopter, died on November 14 in Huntington Beach, Calif. He was 89.

Born July 6, 1926, Tobias served in the U.S. Marines from 1943 to 1944 and trained on the Boeing Stearman. Following his service, Tobias remained involved in aviation, working for the Martin Company before joining Boeing in 1962. There he led the Turbine Division and was director of program administration for the Boeing 747.

He joined Sikorsky in 1973 and steered the production and development of medium and large helicopters, including the launch of the first U.S. privately financed medium-lift commercial helicopter, the S-76. He helped bring in the nearly $3 billion U.S. Army Utility Tactical Transport Aircraft System contract for the UH-60A (Black Hawk) helicopter, the largest military contract awarded in a decade.

Tobias also had held senior positions with Rohr and Fairchild Industries, and after retiring from Sikorsky he became president of Rogerson Hiller. He was also active on a number of boards, including as president and chairman of the American Helicopter Society and of the Society's Vertical Flight Foundation.

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