

PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL AVIATION HERITAGE AREA'S  
WICK WRIGHT AWARD TO THE SCHIEWETZ FOUNDATION

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Wright B Flyer Inc., Miamisburg, Ohio

*Award presentation by Dr. Vincent Russo,  
president and co-founder of Air Camp,  
a National Aviation Heritage Area site*

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# “Leveraging the Chance to Feed the Curiosity of Children”

Acceptance remarks by Rick Schwartz  
on behalf of The Schiewetz Foundation

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Thank you, Vince ... thank you, Dick Reynolds ... and thank you to the National Aviation Heritage Area for this award to The Schiewetz Foundation.

It's no surprise to anyone here today that Dayton and our nation need more young people in STEM careers.

The first step, of course, is to encourage a child's curiosity about the wonders of our world that require a solid understanding of science ... technology ... engineering ... and math.

And that's what Air Camp does.

As kids growing up in Dayton in the '50s and '60s, my brother Ron and I took up a hobby as amateur radio operators.

We were **naturally curious about electronics** and **how they worked**.

**But back then, there was no opportunity like Air Camp in Dayton.**

So our **curiosity** had to be fed **in other ways**.

**We were LUCKY!**

Since our dad was an engineer in composite materials at Wright-Patt, Ron and I took every chance we got to **visit dad's research labs** ... and see **electronics up close** inside the **avionics labs**.

We learned even more about electronics from **family friends**, whose fathers were **electrical engineers at the base** and **amateur radio operators** on the side.

We got to **watch** them ... **ask questions** ... and **listen** to their stories.

**That's how STEM worked in those days.**

After Ron and I found out that the **YMCA in Dayton** had an **amateur radio station** – and a **hobby room for building electronics** that was open to the public – we took advantage of that opportunity.

Using profits from our **Dayton newspaper delivery routes**, we saved up enough money to **buy the supplies we needed** to **build our own tube radios ... and later, transistor radios**.

It was **hands-on experience**.

And we were 100 percent **self-taught**.

**Because that's how STEM worked in those days.**

**By the time my brother and I got to high school, we were looking for more.**

And we got it from **our physics teacher Mr. Sipe**, who took it upon himself to **feed our curiosity even further.**

Mr. Sipe challenged Ron with **extra projects** for **extra credit** on the **theories** of **physics** and **electronics.**

By the time I got to high school four years later, Mr. Sipe **noticed my interest** in **the practical side** of electronics.

**He fed my curiosity** by helping me find **magazine articles** about **all the amazing new products and inventions** that were using **electronics.**

**Ron and I were LUCKY!**

**Because of Mr. Sipe and our chance experiences as kids,** Ron went on to study **electrical engineering at MIT** and enjoyed a wonderful career at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories in Washington State.

I went on to study **industrial engineering** at the University of Akron and early in my career helped to develop our **ERP and accounting systems** at Winsupply. These systems now serve **thousands of entrepreneurs and their teams** at local companies nationwide.

**Today, the Dayton region is FORTUNATE to have Air Camp.**

**It provides the programs and people we need to feed our kids' curiosity in STEM careers – and not leave it to CHANCE or LUCK.**

**And that is why The Schiewetz Foundation continues to support Air Camp – and Teachers Air Camp in particular.**

We do it because of **leverage**.

**For every teacher who attends Air Camp ... at least 75 kids will be inspired in some way.**

That happens when teachers **infuse what they've learned here in Dayton** into their lesson plans back at school.

Since **80 teachers** across the country come to camp each summer, that's **6,000 more kids a year** who might become **a little more curious about STEM** – about **electronics** ... **aviation** ... **aerospace** ... and **technology**.

**To The Schiewetz Foundation, that is something well worth investing in!**

On behalf of the Foundation, I am proud to know that Air Camp has **earned a national reputation on par with the STEM camps at Space Center Houston**.

Our national reputation **further economic development** to help **Dayton**. And that's a **big part of our mission** at the Foundation.

Along the way, Air Camp teaches the values of **scholarship**, **leadership** and **citizenship**, which The Schiewetz Foundation is proud to support.

**Again, thank you all for this recognition.**

It is the foundation's **honor** and **privilege** to help teachers in STEM **feed the curiosity of children** in **Dayton** ... and throughout **our nation**.

**Thank you.**