

STEPHEN J. BOTOS



Stephen J. Botos, engineer, inventor, company founder and CEO, philanthropist, adored husband, father, and grandfather passed away on Friday, April 28, 2023.

Stephen was born in Budapest, Hungary on December 24th, 1938 to Emily and Stephen Botos Sr. Following the deprivations of World War 2, he trained as a tool and die maker though his desire was to be an engineer, a path denied him by the communist authorities. After it was clear the 1956 Hungarian revolution had failed and subsequent Russian occupation was imminent, he dramatically escaped. As if ripped from the pages of a movie script, his flight into Austria required him to leap off of a moving train into total darkness to avoid capture; hide in the bottom of a hay wagon to get to the border; and crawl through a minefield at night with machine gun fire overhead to eventual safety.

After settling in Pittsburgh, Stephen served his new country for two years in the U.S. military, where he was actively recruited for officer's school. But he had a vision for his future and an ironclad resolve to pursue it. Stephen did his first design work with Goerz Optical Co., in Pittsburgh while at the same time attending night courses in mechanical engineering at the University of Pittsburgh. He completed his degree in the then-fastest time for a night school engineering student in the history of the University.

During this time, Stephen designed test devices for highly precise inertial control systems for the aerospace industry, including the Apollo programs of the 1960s. His understanding of high-precision technologies in mechanics and electronics developed during this time.

In 1970, he and several of his engineering colleagues teamed up and founded Aerotech, Inc. Aerotech came from humble beginnings starting life in a garage on Washington Boulevard. Beginning with Stephen's first patent and subsequent introduction of electronic controls and motorized positioners, Aerotech grew rapidly, necessitating a move to the RIDC park in O'Hara township, its headquarters and production center ever since.

Today, Aerotech is a company with over 500 employees worldwide. The company has prospered due to the values Stephen established as the guiding principles of Aerotech. These include a dedication to engineering research and development; a steadfast commitment to American manufacturing, and a commensurate focus on employee development and retention.

In the course of his working life, this mechanical engineer was able to register eleven U.S. patents and received numerous awards. He was particularly proud of the ACMS Benjamin Rush Award, which was given to him for the further development of intraocular lenses to improve eyesight. He was also awarded the ASPE Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Society for Precision Engineering in 2019. This prestigious award is only given annually to one person who has made an important contribution to the field of precision engineering. He is a recipient of the University of Pittsburgh's distinguished engineering alumni award and one of the original founders of the Pittsburgh High Technology Council.

Over the duration of his long career, countless individuals around the world have benefitted from Stephen's innovations in precision motion control. Aerotech employees, local communities, students, and the broader engineering and manufacturing communities have been strengthened and supported by his ethical leadership, altruism, and passionate vision.

Stephen is survived by his beloved wife of over 50 years, Carole; his sons, Steve (Lisa) and Mark (Lori); daughters, Lynn (John) and Jill; grandchildren, Tilman, Evan, Liam, Sara, Megan, and Dana; and great-grandchildren, Lilly and Daunte. He was pre-deceased by his sister, Emily Munkachy (Dr. Louis Munkachy).

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the St. Margaret Foundation (stmargaretfoundation.org) or St. Anthony Charitable Foundation (stanthonykids.org).

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