A Legacy With Wings

Peter VandenBosch
1923-2014
In 1992, I was getting ready to fly a group of people out of the Tulip City Airport. I don’t remember the exact date, but I remember what happened like it was yesterday. Before my flight, I walked into the briefing room to use the weather terminal. There was this “old guy” ahead of me. When he finished, he turned around, took one look at me and said, “Hey! I need a professional pilot like you to join our group.” I said, “What group?” He said, “My name is Pete VandenBosch and I would like to tell you about Wings of Mercy.” I had no idea that chance encounter would have such a big impact on my life.

That day I listened carefully to Pete and I liked what I heard. I started flying some Wings of Mercy missions and discovered the joy of helping people in need while doing something I loved! I was thrilled to be a part of this organization. I hadn’t talked to Pete much since that first encounter so I was surprised when, about a year later, he called me and asked me to lunch. We met on a Saturday at the old Holiday Inn in Holland. As we ate, Pete told me he knew a little bit about me but wanted to ask me a few questions. Well I must have answered the questions correctly because by the time we finished lunch, he asked this 31 year old “kid” to join the Wings of Mercy board. At first, I was quite surprised and very honored; but then I thought, oh man what am I getting myself into and can I handle it. Well, we all know that Pete doesn’t take no for an answer so I really had no choice but to accept. Back then if you told me I would still be on the board and succeed a guy like Pete VandenBosch as President, I would have doubled over laughing. I’m grateful it turned out as it did. It has been one of the biggest honors of my life to be on the board. I have been given the opportunity to give wings to those in need but to also be around Pete, soaking up his tutelage and inspiration; his words will forever ring in my ears.

Many of us have heard Pete speak. If you have, you can sense Pete’s faith, his fire, his commitment, and his conviction! It is unwavering. He carried it until the end. What an example he was!
Pete and Joan had retirement by the tail. They could have relaxed, enjoyed and coasted the rest of their lives. But Pete didn’t turn his back on his calling (and neither did his wife Joan). Could we have done the same thing? There were some people, at the time who thought Pete and Joan were out of their minds. I don’t know about you but without Pete’s example, I doubt if I could have done it. I would have felt entitled to my life of leisure, after all I earned it!

Thankfully, Pete did it right. This meant so much to so many:

- It meant for the last 23 years he devoted himself full time to Wings of Mercy even flying patients on Christmas Eve and Mother’s Day.
- It meant that thousands of patients who would not have received desperately needed medical care - got it!
- It meant that hundreds of pilots would join this cause and fly over 8000 missions
- It meant that Peter would tell his story over and over and have a profound impact on so many people.

Pete followed the call and finished his life strong. He set the bar high and it should be our desire to emulate him. Pete had one final goal for Wings of Mercy. He planned for the future and left Wings of Mercy in a position to carry on for many years to come. He knew Wings wasn’t about him, but a “God planned deal.”

On October 15, 2014, Pete received his real wings! As for me, that chance encounter so many years ago obviously wasn’t by chance. We may be sad for our loss but if there was ever a life to celebrate and learn from, it was Peter’s. We can do that by making sure Wings of Mercy continues its’ mission. It will take commitments from all of us. Pete built a solid foundation for this organization and there is no reason for us to be hesitant about the future. As long as there is a need for our services, we will be here to meet it. Please join me and the entire board with a renewal of your support for Wings of Mercy. It will be Pete’s highest honor.

Terry Boer

Reprint of Eulogy Given October 21, 2014

“Our Legacy

“This outfit from the beginning was a God planned deal, it wasn’t me.”

-Peter VandenBosch


Wings of Mercy Board of Directors in 2007.

Peter passing the torch to Terry in 2008.

“The board members I have are awesome. These are business men who are committed to the future of Wings of Mercy. When I am no longer here, I can die knowing that Wings of Mercy is going down the road.”

-Peter VandenBosch
Bill Klungle
SIC
JOHN WORKMAN
JOHN WORKMAN
TERRY BOER
TERRY BOER

Missions Completed June 2014-October 2014

MUSKEGON, MI TO RALEIGH DURHAM, NC
RALEIGH DURHAM, NC TO MUSKEGON, MI
MUSKEGON, MI TO ROCHESTER, MN
ROCHESTER, MN TO MUSKEGON, MI

Brett Meares
SIC
ANDREW MARVIN
ANDREW MARVIN

HOLLAND, MI TO TAMPA, FL
TAMPA, FL TO HOLLAND, MI

Chris Faircloth
SIC
DAN NEVILLE
DAN NEVILLE

GRAND HAVEN, MI TO ANN ARBOR, MI
ANN ARBOR, MI TO GRAND HAVEN, MI

Chris Harper
SIC
JEFF OSTRANDER
JEFF OSTRANDER

MUSKEGON, MI TO MADISON, WI
MADISON, WI TO MUSKEGON, MI

Dave Siegers
SIC
ANN MEENGs

EAST TAWAS, MI TO MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Fred Honhart
SIC
MARC ENGLERIGHT

ANN ARBOR, MI TO HOUGHTON, MI

Gary Sage
SIC
JEFF OSTRANDER
PAUL LEHMAN
PAUL SEGARD

ROCHESTER, MN TO GRAND RAPIDS, MI
LANING, MI TO FORT MEADE, MD
ANN ARBOR, MI TO SAUARY, MI

Gary VanderVeen
SIC
STEVE BOUMAN

LONG ISLAND, NY TO HOLLAND, MI

Gil Coliver
SIC
TWIN COMMANDER
TIM BRUTSCHE
TIM BRUTSCHE

KALAMAZOO, MI TO BEDFORD, MA
BEDFORD, MA TO KALAMAZOO, MI

Kevin Dingman
SIC
MICHAEL KING
MICHAEL KING
MICHAEL KING

EAGLE RIVER, WI TO ROCHESTER, MN
EAGLE RIVER, WI TO ROCHESTER, MN
ANN ARBOR, MI TO SAWYER, MI

Kevin Malone
SIC
DANIEL JONKHOFF
DANIEL JONKHOFF

MUSKEGON, MI TO MADISON, WI
ROCHESTER, MN TO MUSKEGON, MI

Kim Gary
SIC
ALEX ANDEREgg

ANN ARBOR, MI TO HOUGHTON, MI

Mark Engleright
SIC
FRED HONHART

HOUGHTON, MI TO ANN ARBOR, MI

Mike Miller
SIC
JASON BLAIR
JASON BLAIR
JASON BLAIR
JASON BLAIR
MARC ENGLERIGHT
MARC ENGLERIGHT
RYAN VEENSTRA
SIC

SAWYER, MI TO ANN ARBOR, MI
HOUGHTON, MI TO ANN ARBOR, MI
ONTONAGON, MI TO ANN ARBOR, MI
HOUGHTON, MI TO ANN ARBOR, MI
ROCHESTER, MN TO TRAVERSE CITY, MI
ESCANABA, MI TO ANN ARBOR, MI
ANN ARBOR, MI TO HOUGHTON, MI

Nick Jilek
SIC
ELLEN NORTHAM
ELLEN NORTHAM

ROCHESTER, MN TO EAGLE RIVER, WI
EAGLE RIVER, WI TO ROCHESTER, MN

Peter Tobin
SIC
ELLEN NORTHAM
ELLEN NORTHAM

ROCHESTER, MN TO EAGLE RIVER, WI
EAGLE RIVER, WI TO ROCHESTER, MN

Tom Wilkoski
SIC
JIMMIE SZAIOKVIVS
JOHN WERNER

MADISON, WI TO IRON MOUNTAIN, MI
ROCHESTER, MN TO EAGLE RIVER, WI

“ I am surrounded by the greatest group of givers I have..."
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“I am surrounded by the greatest group of givers I have ever experienced in my life!” - Peter VandenBosch
Here are just a few examples of how free flights really can change lives...

Your donations make it possible for Wings to reimburse our pilots for mission related expenses. This means that you help them shoulder the cost of a donated flight so that they can volunteer more often and together we can give more people access to advanced medical care.

Two of a Kind

Wings pilot Scott Sedam has a special place in his heart for 6 year old Natalee who received a liver transplant in April of this year. Scott has a transplanted kidney himself. He will clear his schedule anytime he possibly can to help Natalee get to and from her follow-up appointments. Natalee is doing great!

Mark and Sarah are smiling more these days since Mark finished his chemo treatments. His lymphoma is still in remission. Wings of Mercy pilots make it possible for Mark to get from his home in Wisconsin to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN.

Future Wings of Mercy Pilot

You can’t tell by looking, but this little guy is being kept alive by treatments he is receiving in Boston with the help of Wings of Mercy pilots. According to his mom, four year old Owen loves to fly and thinks “His pilots are coming for him,” every time he hears a plane overhead.
Young Mom Battles Cancer

Leah received encouraging news in her battle against thyroid cancer from Mayo Clinic doctors. Wings pilot Gary Sage snapped this picture of Leah, husband Ben and mom Victoria on a recent flight in Gary’s Cessna 421.

Hope for Chronic Lyme Disease

Pilots John Olson and Rick Terzo are seen here with Katie and her mother Beverly before a recent flight to Rockville, MD, where Katie receives treatments for Chronic Lyme Disease. Beverly said, “The local doctors don’t know what to do with Katie. We were so blessed by Wings of Mercy and the pilots were just wonderful.”

Wings of Mercy gratefully acknowledges gifts made in memory of:

Elmo Hahn III  Larry Ruffle
Chris Boes  Greg Enciso
Ethel Schierbeek  Jessica Hesley
Justin Welch  Mark Bard
Andrew Tillman  Rev. Lou Benes
Asher Huminsky  Douglas McLouth
Stan Hamstra  Karl Jurries
Jean Vanderwest  Harriet Tummel
Martin Faasse  Gerald Irwin
Peter VandenBosch  Tim Johnson
Gerald Baas

Wings of Mercy gratefully acknowledges gifts made in honor of:

John Workman  Rob Becker
The Geurink Family  Ann Meengs
Mark Sislo

Please consider Wings of Mercy in your estate planning. We can help you—help others by Giving Wings to Those in Need.

Call 1-888-786-3729
www.wingsofmercy.org

“Keep this thing squeaky clean and never be ashamed of the name of Jesus Christ.”

-Peter VandenBosch
When Peter VandenBosch founded Wings of Mercy in 1991, he was called by God to pursue a new kind of life. He was given a new set of priorities and a new way to measure success. Loving the Lord and loving his neighbor went to the top of his to do list. Creating opportunities for others to join him in this new life became his measure of success.

The joy people find in serving God and neighbor through Wings of Mercy is Peter’s legacy.